

No chance for Gerakan if Pakatan performs
Malaysiakini.com
May 1, 2008
Soon Li Tsin and Francis Paul

Gerakan's hopes in reclaiming power in their stronghold state of Penang could well be over if the new Pakatan Rakyat government performs, said Gerakan advisor Dr Lim Keng Yaik. MCPX

The vocal veteran politician observed that depending on how Pakatan runs the island state, "Gerakan will need '10 years and beyond' to win Penang back."

lim keng yaik interview 280408 09"However, if Pakatan can perform better than us previously, then we can kiss our hopes goodbye.

"If (Gerakan) wants to maintain Penang, - the party must now be seen as leading the opposition in the state," he told Malaysiakini in an exclusive interview held at his new Selangor party office in Bandar Utama on Monday.

The former energy, water and telecommunications minister appeared relaxed when met, arming himself with a pack of Salem menthol cigarettes and a cup of coffee when he told the Malaysiakini journalists to "bring it on".

Disappointed old man

His animated answers became emotive when asked why he was so critical of former Gerakan deputy secretary-general Lee Kah Choon leaving the party and working for the Penang state government.

"Of course (I am angry with him) but not on behalf of the party. (It is like a) disappointed old man who saw one of his sons go against the family.

"When he left I knew (he was) opportunistic. (He was) more interested in the position rather than being loyal to the party," he said bitterly.

lee kah choon lim guan eng penang 220408Lee sparked controversy last week when he was appointed by Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng as a director for the state's investment arm - Penang Development Corporation (PDC) and InvestPenang.

He subsequently withdrew from the party after being issued a show cause letter from Gerakan acting president Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Keng Yaik said that party leaders would have most probably agreed with Lee to take up the post if they were informed first about it.

"If he had the brevity to discuss with the party leadership, they would (have) most probably agreed with him to take up the post.

"If he had briefed us, we would have had a hard time seeing this so-called new paradigm shift as espoused by the 'great' Guan Eng," he said.

The former Gerakan president proceeded to criticise Guan Eng for politicking and poaching

for members from other parties.

"It is not just about Kah Choon. If you go to Perak there are going to be 500 councillors leaving and DAP can go find their councillors who can perform.

"You have to poach but in the (elections) you won, you go and deliver lah. Why you poach our people to do the job for you?"

"You are now voted in as CM, go on and behave like a CM and do your job rather than politicking at every turn of the corner," he asserted.

Anwar's impatience

Despite criticising Pakatan throughout the interview, the outspoken Gerakan veteran pointed out that he will give the opposition a chance.

"Of course, I give them every chance. Don't you think we gave them the best chance by instituting a smooth transition? Don't you give us that credit and to Tsu Koon?" he asked.

Asked if he would help them, he waved off the idea and laughed: "Thank you very much, I am retired", adding in jest, "I'll sabotage them."

anwar ibrahim pc 180208 01However, Keng Yaik warned that PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim is like a "chameleon" and that his impatience will prevent him from becoming prime minister.

"I know Anwar and that in his haste in wanting to become the PM whether he was in Umno or outside Umno now, that would be his downfall. He'll never get it," he said.

Quizzed about the future of his only son, Si Pin, the retired politician said he has never encouraged his son to go into politics.

"You might not believe it but I discouraged him to come up to elective politics. My wife also discouraged him.

"But his interest is there and he decided for himself. So it is up to him," he said.

Si Pin, who contested for the first time in the March elections, lost to PKR's Tian Chua in the Batu parliamentary seat by 9,455 votes.

Towards the end of the interview, Keng Yaik admitted that he had declined interviews from Malaysiakini because he did not want to criticise the government while he was still in office.

"But now I'm free. Even though my words are quite guarded, I still maintain that discipline that you may criticise the party but not the personalities involved.

"I've seen how you influenced voters so I better join the act (laughs). I thought you guys can only influence a few eggheads but now, I know better lah," he added.