

**Koh-Lim public debate on... if conditions met  
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In 1990, the Chinese Town Hall in Penang was the debate venue for two young political nemeses from DAP and Gerakan. The protagonists then Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and former chief minister Koh Tsu Koon are all set for a rematch, 18 years later.

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Lim Guan Eng versus Koh Tsu Koon, Part 2. This time its about an alleged land scam.

penang lim guan eng pc lim guan eng 200608 02However Lim has to accept Koh's two conditions - that Koh will be privy to all information necessary for the debate and it will occur after the court case pertaining to the case has concluded.

Back in 1990 Lim was then opposition DAP's Youth chief, and Koh his Gerakan counterpart. In that year too Koh rose to become state leader after the electoral defeat of his mentor and chief minister Lim Chong Eu.

2008's electoral results removed Gerakan and Koh from power, and paved the way for the present DAP led government with Lim at the helm.

Lim said yesterday he was open to a debate with his predecessor on what he described as "probably the biggest scandal in Penang".

Lim was referring to an alleged 'blunder' - committed by the Penang land committee during Koh's tenure - that may result in the present DAP-led state government having to cough out RM40 million to a private contractor.

The land committee approved a contractor's application for state land for lease- when it was already awarded to another company.

### **Two conditions**

Koh has accepted the bait with conditions attached in his written statement today.

"First, all files and documents pertaining to this case in the Chief Minister's office and the state government's various departments must be declassified and made available to me for my reference to prepare for the debate.

"Such information is needed by both sides to prepare for arguments in the debate. It will not be fair at all if he has access to information and I do not," he added.

gerakan koh tsu koon pc 041007 smilesSecondly, Koh's participation in the debate is conditional on the conclusion of the court proceedings pertaining to the land issue.

"This condition is not an excuse to avoid or delay the debate. It is important because some of the points raised in the debate may jeopardise the state government's position in the court hearing. It may even be sub judice," he said.

As a corollary to the last condition, Koh said further, Lim has to "immediately retract and stop

mentioning again his often repeated open allegations, since March 2008 regarding the potential loss of RM40 million by the state government in this case."

"By repeatedly quoting the figure of RM40 million, he has definitely given the impression that the present state government seems prepared to pay for this big quantum as claimed by the plaintiff.

"This will jeopardise the state government's position in the court hearing to reduce substantially the claimed quantum, based on the arguments put in by the previous state government," said Koh.

Koh added that irrespective of who eventually wins the debate, "what is even more important is that we (Gerakan and Barisan Nasional) should all try by all means to reduce the amount claimed from the state government."

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