

Chang becomes favourite for Gerakan No. 2

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A REMARK by the Gerakan president that the party needs to achieve a "balance between Penang and Perak" has catapulted Perak exco member cum vice-president Chang Ko Yuon into the favourite spot for the No. 2 post.

Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, who steps down as party chief on Sunday, has hinted at his choice for deputy president, who is currently Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon, although Koh, the president-designate, is non-committal about who should succeed him.

Koh had, just days before, said secretary-general Datuk Seri Chia Kwang Chye is a candidate for the No. 2 post, but not the only choice.

A report in *Sin Chew Daily* yesterday said Lim believes the person who will succeed Koh as No. 2 must:

- » have the capability and grassroots support;
- » be from Perak; and
- » be younger than Koh.

Apart from Chang, 50, another party leader from Perak who fits the bills is 45-year-old Youth chief Datuk Mah Siew Keong.

However, in terms of experience and capability, Chang, who sits on the state executive committee and is also the party's state chief, has the edge over Mah.

Party sources said that although Koh, who officially takes over from Lim on Sunday, may not concur with Lim, the latter's wishes will nevertheless be food for thought for Koh.

A source close to Koh disclosed that he has made no preparations for a possible move to Kuala Lumpur, indicating that the chief minister will stay put in Penang in the next general election.

If this is the case, there is a good possibility that Chang may not only bag the party No. 2 post but also be made a federal minister, the second party deputy president to hold a ministerial post after Datuk Paul Leong.

In 1986, Lim left the Perak state exco to contest the Bruas parliamentary seat and won. He was subsequently made a minister. Interestingly enough, word is that Chang will contest the Bruas seat in the coming general election.