

# PPP offers Gerakan merger

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PENANG: The People's Progressive Party (PPP) has proposed to merge with Gerakan so that the two multiracial parties can speak out in one voice for all Malaysians.

PPP president Datuk M. Kavyeas made the surprise announcement during his speech at the opening of the state PPP convention by Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon here yesterday.

"I'm open to this idea and we can start talking about it after April next year (when Dr Koh takes over as party president from Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik).

"But, don't *kacau* (disturb) my parliamentary seat in Taiping," he said.

The 700-strong audience, including 300 delegates, rose and clapped following the statement.

In his speech, Dr Koh, who is Gerakan deputy president, said he took the suggestion well and added the two parties should cooperate more closely first.

"There will be of course problems like who will be the president of the merged identity," Dr Koh said.

As for the Taiping parliamentary seat, the two parties can share it, Dr Koh said.

He said he could not make any commitment on the merger and was sure Dr Lim would also say the same thing.

Speaking to newsmen later, Kavyeas, who is Deputy Minister

in the Prime Minister's Department, said he was not eyeing any posts if the two parties merged.

"I can hold the position of deputy president or vice-president or even take charge of Perak," he said.

Kavyeas said there were proposals for the Indian Progressive Front and the Malaysian Indian-Muslim Congress to merge with PPP but the idea did not take off as the two parties wanted to become direct members of Barisan Nasional.

It is learnt that 80% of Gerakan members are Chinese, Indians (15%) and the rest Malays and other races.

For the PPP, 48% of the members are Indians, Chinese (32%), Malays (13%) and the rest others.