

Name alternative heads for Pakatan states, Lim dares BN
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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 17 — Barisan Nasional (BN) should reveal the names of its alternative candidates for menteri besar and chief minister in Pakatan Rakyat (PR) states, Lim Guan Eng said today.

The Penang chief minister was responding to Datuk Seri Najib Razak's assurance to Gerakan yesterday that Umno will never lay claim to the leadership of Penang should BN win back the state from PR at the next general election.

The prime minister told Gerakan to work harder in order to wrest back the state from the DAP, and that the party should be prepared to accept "adjustments" to the current seat allocation system for the greater good of the ruling coalition.

"I would say before they do that, they should suggest who is their alternative chief minister.

"We have to be ready... If there is an alternative CM we are interested in knowing. Not just in Penang, Selangor as well. Who is their alternative MB? Kedah too, Kelantan as well," Lim (picture) told reporters in George Town today.

He said PR viewed BN's challenge to win back Penang "very seriously", and claimed BN had been using "lies" and underhanded tactics to undermine his state administration.

"We will face the dirtiest election ever. You have Umno spreading lies we are anti-Islam but on the other hand you have Gerakan attacking the state government for increasing allocation for Islamic affairs," said the Bagan MP.

Lim also said Penang would not follow Najib's lead if the PM were to call for a general election this year, but might do otherwise if national polls are to be held in 2012.

"If it's held next year the likelihood (of Penang calling for state elections) increases. This year no," said Lim.

The PM told Gerakan delegates during the party's AGM yesterday that Penang Umno had agreed it would not seek to take the reins in the northern state.

Najib said Gerakan should not be trapped in the past and that it needs to make "painful choices" to meet the demands of the post-2008 political landscape if the party hopes to return to its former days of glory.

When asked if the state leadership would remain with Gerakan, Najib said BN was still discussing the matter but reiterated that Umno would not seek the role.

Gerakan, which governed Penang for 39 years, was wiped out in the 2008 general election after losing in all the 12 state seats it contested while Umno secured 11 seats.

In the election, the PR parties of the DAP, PKR and PAS swept 29 seats in the 40-seat assembly, with the DAP leading the charge with 19 seats, followed by PKR's nine and PAS's

one.

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