

**Tsu Koon denies decision on new Penang BN chief**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 23 — Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon denied today he will be replaced by Gerakan secretary-general Teng Chang Yeow as Penang Barisan Nasional (BN) chief, saying the ruling coalition's top council had yet to discuss the issue.

"This (matter) was not raised at the meeting in November," the Gerakan president was quoted by Bernama Online as saying.

The Malaysian Insider reported this morning that BN will name Chang Yeow as its new state chief while Dr Teng Hock Nan will remain Penang Gerakan chairman as part of a move to recapture the island state from the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) pact, led by DAP's Lim Guan Eng.

The Malaysian Insider learnt that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will announce the coalition's new line-up tomorrow when he visits Penang for the Chinese New Year celebrations.

The Malaysian Insider also understands Gerakan could get more state seats at the expense of coalition partner MCA although both parties lost all their seats in Election 2008.

Disputing this, Koh said the public should wait for the next BN supreme council meeting for any announcement on the matter, and stressed that the decision to appoint anyone was in the hands of Najib who is also BN president.

He said that according to the BN constitution, any decision on the matter had to be done through consultation among BN supreme council members.

Koh also pointed out that Gerakan's Penang chief post was an elected position, and that a potential candidate was elected during a "state delegates' conference."

A BN source told The Malaysian Insider that Najib will name Chang Yeow as Penang BN chief in a "renewed effort to get back the state."

Chang Yeow was a three-term state assemblyman for Padang Kota between 1995 and 2008 when he lost the seat and the state BN government fell. He was a state executive councillor between 2004 and 2008.

Hock Nan has been Gerakan Penang chief since 2008 and has been a party vice-president since 2005. He has also spent three terms as an assemblyman and was slotted to be a potential chief minister if Gerakan kept the state government in Election 2008.

He told Sin Chew Daily in an interview last July he did not intend to contest another general election but would leave it to the political situation to decide whether he should indeed make way. Hock Nan kept his state chief post after surviving a no-confidence vote against him in October 2010.

"There are some discussions for Gerakan to get more seats as a sign of confidence that they can help form the state government. BN thinks Gerakan has a better chance than MCA to win seats in Penang," another source told The Malaysian Insider.

But the insider said seat allocation is an on-going matter between the 13 parties in BN.

The Malaysian Insider reported last November that Gerakan was due to name either Chang Yeow or Penang vice-chief Ong Thean Lye to head the state chapter and recapture its one-time political fortress from the DAP in the next general election.

But Gerakan president Koh did not announce any names, keeping Hock Nan in the post.

However, Koh did announce that he will not take part in coming general election after BN-linked media spoke about the need for changes in the multi-racial party. It is understood that the view in Putrajaya is that the mild-mannered Gerakan chief should step down as head of the BN component party before the general election if the coalition is to have any chance of wresting back Penang from PR.

While Koh has not been dogged by allegations of corruption and abuse of power as other politicians, he is viewed as indecisive and a symbol of the BN leadership which was rejected by the voters in 2008.

Najib has spoken behind closed doors on the need to rejuvenate the Gerakan leadership with younger talent and acknowledges that BN component parties need new talent if inroads are to be made in Penang, where DAP secretary-general Guan Eng is a formidable opponent.

Koh, who has helmed the party since 2008, has been constantly criticised for his leadership which many deem as "weak and soft", and is also under immense pressure from party members to come up with a firm decision on his position in the party.

Dissenting voices grew even stronger at the party's 40th national delegates' conference in mid-October, which prompted the minister in the Prime Minister's Department to announce to the delegates at the end of the conference that he was "willing to sacrifice himself for the party".

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