

BN confident of 15 Penang seats, can regain state, say sources
The Malaysian Insider
April 09 , 2012
By Jahabar Sadiq

KUALA LUMPUR, April 9 — Barisan Nasional (BN) is confident of retaking Penang from Pakatan Rakyat (PR) in the next elections, with sources saying today an internal survey shows 15 seats are in the bag but expects a campaign against weak Malay leadership in PKR and PAS to yield more dividends.

The Malaysian Insider understands that Datuk Seri Najib Razak is confident that Gerakan secretary-general Teng Chang Yeow can energise the party to go head-on against Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, whose DAP has the lion's share of PR's 29 seats in the 40-seat state assembly.

Umno is confident of keeping the 11 seats it won in Penang in Election 2008. — Map courtesy of pdkseyang.blogspot.com
"BN is working hard in Penang and can win it back especially with support from the Malays," a coalition source told The Malaysian Insider.

He said Umno is expected to keep the 11 seats it won in Election 2008 and add a few more at the expense of PKR and PAS. PKR has nine seats while PAS has only one in the current state assembly.

"Umno is campaigning against the weak leadership shown by PKR and PAS in the state. Everything is about the DAP and Lim Guan Eng. There is no team in Penang," he added.

Another source said Najib, who is BN chairman and prime minister, has been pushing his Umno colleagues in Penang to work harder and get back the state, which is a top priority together with Selangor in the coming elections.

BN sources say Najib and his deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin have been rallying their party members to ramp up their activities as elections are expected as early as June. BN has up to April 2013 to call for polls when its federal mandate expires.

"The focus seems to be on Selangor but top BN leaders also want to take back Penang, especially Gerakan which considers it their home base," a Putrajaya source said.

He pointed out that Gerakan president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon was given another term in the Senate to ensure he leads the party in the coming election campaign. "Dr Koh won't be in the government but he wants to make sure all hands are on deck to beat DAP," he added.

The Malaysian Insider has learnt that Gerakan and the MIC are also confident of winning back some of the seats they lost in Election 2008. While Umno only lost three seats then, Gerakan lost all its 13 seats, MCA lost all nine and MIC lost the two seats it had.

"Gerakan and MIC can win back but there is some concern about MCA. BN has lost nearly 80 per cent of the urban Chinese vote and that affects MCA," the Putrajaya source said.

BN has been harping on various issues, particularly the sale of land in Bayan Mutiara to developers, in its campaign to win back Penang although Lim has been seen as a popular leader to keep Penang in PR's hands for another term.

The state recorded the highest foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2011 with RM9.1 billion, with Selangor coming in second at RM8.74 billion.

Lim has credited the success to his competency, accountability and transparency (CAT) model in attracting investment to the island state but BN says some of the effort should be shared with its work when it ruled the state and also federal agencies that brought investors there.

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