

Penang BN set for battle royal to recapture 'crown jewel'
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GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Barisan Nasional has directed all its divisions to fully mobilise their election machinery by mid-June as the coalition readies itself to wrest back its "crown jewel" state which was lost to Pakatan Rakyat in the 2008 general election.

The war cry adopted by the Penang BN to rally its troops for the mission is Semboyan Dibunyikan (War drums have been struck).

State BN chairman Teng Chang Yeow said all divisional heads would be required to get their preparations up-to-date to face the crucial 13th general election which is expected to be called anytime by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Teng said divisional election machinery would be required to use various means to reach the people, including through alternative and conventional media, pamphlets and newsletters.

"We will use all these means to highlight the many issues which are plaguing the people of Penang under the current state administration," he said during a press conference at the state BN headquarters here yesterday.

State BN secretary Datuk Omar Fauzar, who is Bukit Gelugor Umno division chief, has been appointed as the state BN election director.

The main issues the Penang BN hoped to capitalise on are -- press freedom under the current DAP-led state government, low cost housing and worsening traffic congestion in Penang, said Teng.

Citing the issue of press freedom as an example, Teng said what was happening in Penang where the state government had barred certain publications from covering officials functions was something unprecedented.

He said never in Penang's history had any media been banned from covering official or any other function.

"But now reporters can be chased away," he said, citing how even Penang Island Municipal Council (MPPP) councillors were becoming "so big headed" that they dared to bar reporters from covering press conferences held in official capacity.

Teng was referring to MPPP councillor Ong Ah Teong who last week barred journalists from Utusan Malaysia and the New Straits Times from attending his press conference after a routine raid on dirty eateries in Batu Feringghi.

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