

## **Penang Umno branch tars leaders with cronyism brush**

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**By Susan Loone**

The "rebellious" Kampung Mutiara branch alleges that party leaders practise cronyism in distribution of funds, asked the relevant authorities to investigate the matter.

Penang Umno Kampung Mutiara branch, which is under the Bukit Bendera division, has condemned its leaders for allegedly channelling party funds only to their cronies.

bukit bendera agm 080810 rose akmar ahmad with police reportIts chief Rose Akhmar Ahmad (right) said that he is aware that up to RM2 million has been handed over to each division to distribute to the branches under their purview, but his was totally ignored, not receiving even "a single cent".

Rose Akhmar, who addressed about 83 members at a recent annual general meeting in Penang, said Umno divisions and branches are supposed to enjoy other benefits as well - in cash and kind.

"We have allocation for spectacles (RM150), for medical treatment (amount uncertain) of chronic diseases but these are never told to us until we find out from members of other branches," he said.

"We are also supposed to have allocation to repair our broken down houses - especially for the poorer members - what is so wrong about giving our members these benefits?" he asked.

When asked, Penang Umno liaison chief Zainal Abidin Osman said he would comment on the matter later.

### **Opposition to Ahmad Ismail**

The Kampung Mutiara branch incurred the wrath of party leaders when it opposed the leadership of former Bukit Bendera Umno chief Ahmad Ismail (in red shirt).

Ahmad, a controversial leader, was suspended in 2008 for making derogatory remarks against the Chinese community.

When ignored by party leaders, Rose Akmar lodged a police report on Aug 8, 2010, alleging that the state leadership had failed in its duties to inform members about the division's annual general meeting.

He also urged Umno leaders to distribute the funds to needy members and to declare the list of beneficiaries so as to ensure transparency in the matter.

He called on top Umno leaders, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the police to investigate the matter, alleging that the money was never really routed to the party's members.

Despite all the grievances, Rose Akhmar expressed undying and loyal support for Umno, saying that the party remains relevant.

Despite being "ignored" by party leaders when he was hospitalised recently, Rose Akhmar said he continues to stay in Umno as he is not greedy for status or titles.

"We even paid for this AGM, printed materials and bought Umno flags with our own money so that the struggle can go on," he said, referring to the event held at Hotel Gurney on Saturday.

At the end of his speech at the AGM, he prompted branch members present at the meeting to rise up and shout "Hidup Melayu! Hidup Umno! And Hidup BN!"

Meanwhile, Rose Akhmar complained that his branch has never be invited or asked to prepare for the coming polls although it is public knowledge that the season is in full swing.

"As far as I know, only a few branches out of 25 under the Bukit Bendera division- belonging to cronies - have received allocation to prepare for elections," he added.

"Where is justice, integrity and the pledge to defend the Malays (according to the Umno slogan)," he decried.