

BN leaders: Race-based politics must go

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By Malay Mail team

Senior BN politicians have called for an end to race-based politics on the 44th anniversary of the May 13 riots as part of reconciliation efforts to make the party relevant to the present generation, which is averse to divisive politics.

Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor suggested that the ruling coalition merge into a single party as part of its rebranding exercise to make it relevant to all Malaysians.

The Putrajaya MP said BN is currently studying all possibilities to rebrand and make significant changes. "BN could perhaps be made into a single party that is no longer race-based someday," he told The Malay Mail.

Tengku Adnan was responding to Umno supreme council member Nazri Abdul Aziz's call for the party to ubah (change). In a front page report in The Malay Mail on Friday, Nazri said BN is outdated and does not resonate with the younger voters, who emphasise on unity.

Tengku Adnan said for changes to take place sooner, youths should be more educated on politics and history.

Another Umno supreme council member, Saifuddin Abdullah (right), said BN should try to address a newer form of politics to appeal to youths.

"They don't like race-based politics as well as parties that carry baggage. Most youths relate to 'democratic hopes' like freedom of speech, human rights and fairness, whereas BN is currently only good at addressing 'developmental hope', such as welfare and infrastructure," he said.

Saifuddin believes change in BN should begin with the appointment of younger and more youth-oriented people in its leadership.

"Youth-orientedness is not just about attending and organising programmes. It is about developing a genuine world view on politics through experience and education," he said, adding that BN should encourage direct membership for youths.

"There are many who want to support BN but are not comfortable in joining the component parties for various reasons," he said.

Meanwhile, three Malay leaders: Umno vice-president Hishammuddin Hussein, Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin and PKR deputy president Azmin Ali, have also called for an end to partisan politics to get Malaysia moving forward.

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