

Umno MP: Political climate opens door for Nazir

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The current political climate affecting both Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat has opened up room for Nazir Abdul Razak to form a new political party.

Kepala Batas MP Reezal Merican Naina Merican said this when asked to respond to a news report that banker Nazir, the brother of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, is going to establish a non-partisan and multiracial political party.

Although this is not something unusual, the Umno supreme council member said it may affect and have an impact on the country's political landscape.

"Nazir carries a huge name as the son of a great statesman (former prime minister) Abdul Razak. Of course it will have some impact if he does so," Reezal (photo) told the media at the Parliament lobby.

However, he said a party which is formed due to discontent will not survive for a long time.

"A party cannot be formed out of feelings of disgruntlement. A party must have a solid foundation and fundamentals, as this will determine if the party lasts or not.

"Many parties even if headed by big personalities but if the foundation is not strong, will collapse. For example Semangat 46 was formed by great person but it did not stay that long," Reezal said.

"So, it's not that easy," noted the Kepala Batas parliamentarian.

Different paths

When asked if Nazir would go against his eldest brother, he said brothers can take different paths and become leaders in their respective parties, citing the example of Umno veteran leader Shahrir Abdul Samad and PAS' Khalid Abdul Samad.

"I think that is perfectly fine. It will be interesting to witness new developments in Malaysian politics over next five to 10 years. Democracy is being tested as it matures," he said.

As Malaysia is heading towards developed nation status, it must emulate the best ideals of democracy where people have the freedom of expression and the freedom to form new parties, he added.

According to Asia Sentinel the new party, to be headed by Nazir, will seek to dramatically redraw the country's political landscape and put an end to divisive racial politics.

Nazir, who heads the CIMB Bank, is reported to have approached former deputy education minister Saifuddin Abdullah (photo), one of Umno's few liberal-minded leaders, to lead the new party.

When asked if BN parties should abandon the race-based concept, Reezal said the country will still continue with race-based politics.

He pointed out so-called multiracial parties, citing DAP, PKR and PPP, when scrutinised closely, have a single ethnicity dominating.

"More importantly, the parties shouldn't be race-centric," he said, added that Umno needed to go back to colour-blind 'old' Umno, when the party and the country were headed by Tunku Abdul Rahman and Abdul Razak.

"Tunku enjoyed a close friendship with late Tan Siew Sin, he went down all over to defend and campaign for Tan. He even appointed Tan as finance minister.

"Thong (Yaw Hong), a Chinese, was the director-general of Economic Planning Unit (EPU) during Abdul Razak's era. We have to emulate the spirit of our forefathers," he emphasised.

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