

**BN candidates selection: Be more democratic**  
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**Diamaukerusi**

As an Oxford graduate, Umno Youth deputy head Khairy Jamaluddin would have seen how democracy is practiced in England where each 'wakil rakyat' truly represents his or her constituents because they have actually put him or her there.

He would know that as a young lawyer, Tony Blair had to run around the country seeking interviews with local Labour party chiefs whenever a vacancy occurred and only found success in the present Sedgfield constituency after failing in others.

On the other hand, Khairy became the Umno Youth deputy chief without any contest because his father-in-law, despite his claim of non-interference, had put him there and because Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussien Onn hopes to use him as his ticket to higher office.

Now, we can see that this culture of imposing leaders on ordinary members of BN component parties is causing anger and disappointment and this may cost the BN dearly in the next general election.

The coming Ijok by-election could be an example. When it comes to choosing leaders and election candidates, only 'political yes-men' will succeed. Not those loyal, party leaders and workers who for years have toiled selflessly for the party.

By choosing K Parthiban for Ijok, MIC chief S Samy Vellu has angered the MIC chief for the Kuala Selangor division, SP Thirumoorthy, who has resigned in protest and is taking with him all the branches in the division.

This may or may not mean much for BN's chances in the coming by-election but the crux of the matter is that this whole damn thing is very undemocratic and represents the steady decline of democracy within BN, especially Umno.

In the early years, Tunku Abdul Rahman had left it to the party divisions to choose their election candidates but over the years, ordinary members of Umno and other BN parties have been told to just shut up and accept whomever is chosen by the party leadership.

Why can't Umno and its partner parties choose party and general election candidates based on 'primaries'. Only then will good and credible leaders emerge to lead the country.

Just look at the existing presidential election in France and the run-up to the US presidential election where the Republicans and the Democrats are letting those who have thrown their hats into the ring to fight it out before their respective parties choose one of them as the party's nominee for the actual presidential contest.

As a highly-educated man, Khairy should introduce democratic reforms in Umno which can then be imposed on other component parties. The MCA was bold enough to do this. The party has already decided that MCA ministers would only serve for two terms.