

Politicians come and go, Rulers here to stay
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Derek Law

I refer to the Malaysiakini report Idris apologises to sultan.

First, it happened in Perlis, where the Raja of Perlis did not agree with the nomination of the PM on the choice of MB. However, the issue of the MB of Perlis was less complicated, as the majority of the state assembly persons did not voice their support for the choice of the PM.

Now, the Sultan of Terengganu (through the Regent Advisory Council) also does not agree with the choice of the PM (Idris Jusoh) as the MB of Terengganu.

For many years, under the leadership of our previous prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Malay Rulers had played a lesser role. However, in recent years, the Malay Rulers have begun to play a more active role as evident by some of the speeches made by the Regent of Perak, Raja Dr Nazrin Shah and the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah,

It cannot be denied that the institution of the Malay Rulers is part and parcel of Malaysia. After all, the police force is officially known as Polis Di Raja Malaysia (Royal Malaysian Police) and according to Article 41 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, 'the Yang di-Pertuan Agong shall be the Supreme Commander of the armed forces of the Federation'.

Unless the issue of the appointment of the Terengganu MB is handled well, Malaysia will face another constitutional crisis involving the Malay Rulers which is potentially bigger than the 1980s constitutional crisis which resulted when the consent of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong was removed for the passing of laws. There was another crisis in the 1990s when the immunity from prosecution granted to the Malay Rulers was removed.

The Sultan of Terengganu must have his own reasons for disagreeing with the nomination of Idris as MB and we shall not speculate on them but it is clear that for the state to be administered smoothly, the Sultan and the MB must have a cordial relationship. It is obvious in this case, the cordial relationship is clearly missing.

So, what can Idris or the BN do to avert a constitutional crisis? The answer is obvious- Idris should make an apology to the Sultan of Terengganu as he has done today and also decline the nomination by the PM for him to be MB of Terengganu.

This is the most honourable, expedient and face-saving solution for both the Sultan of Terengganu and the PM. Politicians come and go, but the Malay Rulers are here to stay. Umno had always advised DAP, PKR and even PAS to respect the Malay Rulers and it's now time for Umno to do the same.

If the PM insists on Idris as MB, the one options available is that the PM request for the intervention of the Conference of Rulers together with the Chief Justice for an interpretation of the Federal and State Constitutions. This route is potentially dangerous as whatever the outcome, Umno will be the loser.

If the interpretation is in favour of the Umno, firstly the daily administration of Terengganu could be severely hampered as the Sultan and MB will be disagreeing over many issues. Secondly, BN and especially Umno will be seen to be highly disrespectful to the Malay

Rulers, not only in Terengganu but potentially in all the states with Malay Rulers. This could jeopardise the administration of all these states and the repercussions could be far reaching.

If the interpretation is in favour of the Sultan of Terengganu, the repercussions could be worse. Potentially, all the other Malay Rulers could request for a change in MB and the states' administrations' could be temporarily paralysed.

The other option is for all the BN state assembly persons in Terengganu resigns to force a state election. Should Umno take this route, they will risk losing Terengganu. The sentiments on the ground are that Umno is being very biadap to the Sultan. Perhaps, the senior Umno leadership is so detached from the rakyat that they fail to see it. The BN leadership must ask, is it worth the risk to lose the entire state over one man? The obvious answer is 'no'.

So, Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, do the right thing to save the party and government that you claim you love so much. Make an apology to the Sultan as you already have done and also decline the nomination to be MB of Terengganu to avert another constitutional crisis. It is the right thing to do.

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