

Gua Musang kick-starts party reform with EGM
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The Gua Musang Umno division is holding its extraordinary general meeting (EGM) today with the hope that more divisions will follow suit to put pressure on the party leadership to hold a special meeting this May. MCPX

The whole idea of the party's EGM is to discuss the Barisan Nasional's poor performance in the March 8 general election.

umno 2007 tengku razaleigh ku li 081107In its EGM today, the Gua Musang division, headed by former Umno vice president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, also wants Umno's nomination quota system for candidates aspiring to contest top leadership posts in the party to be abolished.

The abolition of the quota system would make it easier for Tengku Razaleigh to challenge Umno president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in the party polls this December.

Tengku Razaleigh, also the Gua Musang member of Parliament, has offered to contest for the top post so that he could "heal the party" following its worst defeat in the general election.

He told Bernama yesterday that he was confident the people would support him in his quest to bring about the change they desire in the country.

He added that he had weighed carefully about offering himself to fill a "leadership vacuum" in the country as the people were yearning for "firm and effective leadership".

He said that with his vast experience in government and politics, he would be able to put the country "back on the right track".

Beware of total rejection

On a related matter, former premier and Umno president Dr Mahathir Mohamad also said that it was important for the party to hold an EGM for the well-being of the party as well as to discuss the party's poor performance during the last general election.

He also reiterated that the EGM could be used to discuss amendments to the party constitution, especially on the matter of abolishing its nomination quota system.

mahathir khir toyo kmu forum 010408 06He added that the removal of the quota system would allow members to contest top party posts at the Annual General meeting (AGM) in December without having to secure the minimum nominations as stipulated at present.

"If we disregard Umno members views and arrogantly dismiss their demands it might lead to a total rejection of Umno especially if the opposition alliance show they can provide better governance.

"If something is not done, my fear is that Umno may lose out completely.

"If we believe in the well-being of the people and being transparent, there is nothing better we can do than to respond to their demands," he told reporters last night in a function in Hulu Langat, Selangor.

President under pressure to quit

Abdullah has been put under tremendous pressure by several party veterans who have openly called for Abdullah's resignation to assume responsibility for the BN's dismal showing in the general election.

Abdullah had vowed to continue leading the party and country, saying that he had the mandate from the people to lead.

The quota system, introduced by Mahathir, is in place to protect the top leaders from being challenged during party polls. Under the system, a challenger would need about 58 nominations to contest for the president's post and 38 nominations for the deputy president's post.

In 2004, Tengku Razaleigh received only one nomination - from his Gua Musang division - when he opted to challenge Abdullah for the top post. This time around he is confident of receiving the required numbers, paving way for a tight contest in December.

However his call for the EGM to discuss the general election routing and the removal of the quota system is seen by political observers as a back up plan to make it easier for him to contest in the event he fails to get the minimum nominations.

Traditionally Umno president also assumes the prime minister's post.

LATEST:

The Gua Musang division today unanimously passed a resolution calling for an EGM to be held in May to discuss the party's poor performance in the recently held general election.

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