

Expert: Ku Li needs a strong 'running mate'
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While the idea of going to branch leaders to garner support will no doubt help Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah re-connect with the Umno grassroots, he will still need a strong 'running mate' in his campaign for party leadership.
MCPX

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia political analyst Dr Mohamed Agus Yusoff said that the main problem for the Gua Musang division chief lies in the numbers involved.

tengku razaleigh umno roadshow 160608 11"Umno has about 191 divisions and each one consists of an average of 100 branches," said Mohamed Agus when contacted today.

"For him to reach out to each one is not easy task. And even if he gets the support of some branches, it may not automatically translate to divisional nominations."

Added to the high number of nominations needed and the limited time Razaleigh has to complete his mission, the hurdle is formidable, said the UKM lecturer of political science.

Under the amended Umno constitution, presidential hopefuls need 30 percent of the total number of divisions to nominate them to contest at the party polls.

tengku razaleigh umno roadshow 160608 06Over the last few weeks, Razaleigh, who is fondly known as Ku Li, has criss-crossed the country courting support from Umno branch leaders.

This is the third time Razaleigh is contesting for the top post in Umno.

In 2006, the former finance minister's challenge fizzled out even before it began when he could only muster one nomination, his own Gua Musang, in his bid to oust Umno president and Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Prior to that, his 1987 battle fell short of just 43 votes when he garnered 718 votes to incumbent Dr Mahathir Mohamad's 761 in Umno's general assembly.

"Besides going to branch leaders, Tengku Razaleigh must also make some attempt to get some of the divisions to back him," said Mohamed Agus.

He needs to form alliances

The political science expert was nevertheless upbeat over Razaleigh's strategy and said that it would bring confidence to his supporters.

"By going to the ground, he has signaled his seriousness and intentions to the members. And they won't think of it as main-main.

"There is a phenomenon of wanting change everywhere and Umno is not spared. Added to the fact that he is a charismatic leader and a party stalwart, he stands a good chance."

umno selangor najib muhyiddin event anti pak lah banners 160408 04However, Mohamed Agus warned that if Razaleigh wants to go all the way to the party polls in December, he would need strong allies.

"Muhyiddin (Yassin) would be a good strategic choice," said Mohamed Agus.

The international trade and industry minister is from Johor and with the state having 26 divisions, it will be a force to reckon with, said Mohamed Agus.

Furthermore, Johor is a traditional Umno power base and is in a position to influence other states, he added.

"If he is able to form some kind of alliance with them, it will be a huge boost to his cause."

On Sunday, 25 branches in the Pagoh division in Johor passed a joint resolution at a special meeting calling on Razaleigh and Muhyiddin to contest as president and deputy president respectively.

Muhyiddin is member of parliament for Pagoh and it appeared that the branches are sending a clear message to both leaders to team up to challenge Abdullah and his deputy, Najib Razak.

The extraordinary meeting also wants Umno to abolish the quota system in party elections.

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