

**... but Dr M & Ku Li give him the thumbs down**  
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and veteran Umno leader Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah are of one mind in not wanting former Negeri Sembilan Sembilan menteri besar Isa Samad as the candidate for the Bagan Pinang by-election.

Both Mahathir and Tengku Razaleigh in the past did not see eye-to-eye on certain issues, but this time around both concurred that fielding a money politics tainted Isa would prove to be a liability.

In an interview with *Bernama* yesterday, Mahathir said Umno's image would be hit as the party would be seen as being not serious in fighting money politics if it chose a candidate already found guilty of political corruption.

"Isa was already found guilty. If Umno fields him, it means that Umno is not serious about (curbing) such cases.

Even if he can win there, (we) have to consider what the whole of Malaysia would think of Umno, Mahathir, a former president of the party, was quoted as saying.

Although the Teluk Kemang Umno division wanted Isa as the candidate, Mahathir reminded the party that the by-election involved not only representatives from the division as he would be viewed by the people as representing Umno nationwide and reflecting the party's choice.

"One can win to become Umno president but it does not mean that he can win elections," he said.

Isa was suspended for three years from 2005 for money politics in the 2004 Umno elections. He was originally suspended for six years but that was reduced upon appeal.

**Ku Li issues warning**

Meanwhile, outspoken Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh also warned his party that there could be serious repercussions if it fielded yet another tainted candidate in the Bagan Pinang contest.

He also argued that such a move would not reverse the ruling coalition Barisan Nasional's string of losses in by-elections against Pakatan Rakyat and the major setback of last year's general election.

"If Umno continues to field tainted candidates, the public might justly conclude that it would be better for the country that Umno lost," the member of the Kelantan royal household said in his blog's latest entry today.

Although his statement did not name any potential candidate, it has however been widely speculated that Isa has been tipped to the most likely choice.

"In our now dangerously divided society, it is important not just that elections be won, but that they be won with honour and by honourable individuals," said Tengku Razaleigh.

According to him, people are fed up with corrupt political leaders and elected

representatives and the BN should learn from the results of the recent Permatang Pasir by election.

"(We must be) mindful of the signal sent by Permatang Pasir voters and all the elections since March 8, the leadership should now be especially careful in selecting our candidate for Bagan Pinang.

"Beyond winning and losing political battles, the party leadership should step back and think on how their choice of candidate reflects upon the party and ultimately upon their own integrity.

"Nothing says more about what we stand for and who we are than the (nature) of the leaders we champion," stressed Tengku Razaleigh

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