

Ku Li: Amendments good, but not enough
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Umno veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah described the amendments to the Umno constitution as good but not enough to ignite far reaching reforms.

He also expressed "shock" in the manner the amendments sailed through within an hour during the extraordinary general meeting yesterday.

The Gua Musang MP argued that the amendments would not curb money politics in the party.

"I welcome the amendments to the Umno constitution although I feel it should go a step further with the election of office bearers which should be done by members at the state and branch level and by members of the party, and not just limited to delegates.

"You do not rid yourself of money politics as there would be warlords or people with influence who would direct the election of certain leaders," he said.

"We should correct this by renewing the spirit of the struggle that people (be members of) Umno because they want to be part of the struggle or a cause they are fighting for. It's not because of getting lollies and money," he added.

Credible leaders needed

Secondly, Razaleigh said the practice of the leadership selecting candidates for elections should be stopped.

"We need people who know the ground who can best represent the peoples' interests to serve them well. Why not allow the members to select and elect the candidates?" he asked.

He said the reforms should not stop with the amendments of the constitution but the personality of the parties themselves.

"People want to see change with credible leaders. We need a clean slate of people to represent them. The people are sick and tired of having people hoisted even when they have bad records.

"It is a shame after 60 years of doing service to the people, we resort to this kind of selection," he added.

This was one of three proposals which Razaleigh had made three years ago, including getting rid of the quota system which was adopted by Umno as part of its amendments yesterday.

If Razaleigh's reform proposals were to be adopted, it would mean that more than two million Umno members would have a say in electing their delegates.

The reform adopted by Umno yesterday had expanded the election of national party leaders from a base of 2,510 delegates to 146,500 which would include representatives from the branch level.

Razaleigh also said that he found it hard to digest the fact that such important amendments were dealt with so swiftly.

"Such a big change, and it took one hour. It is all within a piece of paper and I was not able to debate as I was out for lunch. Even if I tried to speak, they may not have allowed it as they only wanted designated speakers to speak," he added.

Meanwhile, Razaleigh reiterated his stand on the Bagan Pinang by-election that although Barisan Nasional had won with a bigger majority it might lose power in the next general election.

"You can view the results of the by-election in many ways but it is not conclusive that the people are with us.

"In a by-election, the results could be one way and it would not be representative of what the results would be in the general election," he said.

PM should interfere in MCA crisis

In another development, Razaleigh said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak should interfere in the MCA crisis.

"Leaders in the alliance and BN have always interfered or used their influence on how the component parties behave.

"After all, it is in the best interest of the coalition that the leaders should have a say and (provide) some form of direction or guidance as to how they should perform or behave," he said.

"You cannot allow it to disintegrate. This is up to him but if I was Najib, I would interfere," he added.

Asked to comment on resolving the oil royalty debate in Kelantan, the former Petronas chairperson said it is clear that the government should have paid the state.

"It is not because I am from Kelantan but because of the agreement... clearly the oil is within our territory and within offshore Kelantan," he said.

"If it is found there, under the agreement it is the right of Kelantan to get payment like in Sabah and Sarawak and also in Terengganu.

"I do not think we should play politics, it is the right of the people. They are taxpayers and they should enjoy this revenue. There are no two ways about this. It is not a matter of politics," he added.

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