

Breach Of Promise Triggers Terengganu Political Crisis

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KUALA LUMPUR, May 13 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Ahmad Said's ungentlemanly conduct over the issue of continuity of the Terengganu leadership is seen as the catalyst to the political crisis afflicting the East Coast state.

A political observer is of the opinion that Ahmad did not keep his promise to step down as Menteri Besar (MB) in an orderly manner, acting in a way which led to the shrouding of the state's political landscape with a lot of question marks following his resignation Monday.

Several hours after releasing the reign of the state, Ahmad, who is also Kijal State Assemblyman, declared he was leaving Umno and becoming an independent elected representative.

Also taking the same line of action were Ajil State Assemblyman Ghazali Taib and Bukit Besi State Assemblyman Roslee Daud.

The political observer draws attention that Ahmad definitely realised that he was to become MB for only one year after the 13th general election (PRU-13), aimed at giving the opportunity to other leaders to take over to strengthen the position of Barisan Nasional (BN) in the state.

For the record, BN ruled Terengganu with a majority of only two seats compared to the opposition in the State Assembly which had 32 seats, when Ahmad headed the state leadership after PRU-13.

At that time, the State Assembly comprised BN which had 17 seats, PAS, 14 and PKR, 1. This led to a gentleman's agreement for Ahmad to step down a year after becoming MB.

According to the observer, it was indeed an open secret when Ahmad became MB for a second term, after holding the post since March 2008.

He also stressed that the question of the appointment of the MB was the prerogative of the Prime Minister.

The resignation of Ahmad as MB and the appointment of Seberang Takir State Assemblyman Datuk Ahmad Razif Abdul Rahman yesterday had received the consent of the Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin.

The political development saw the latest composition in the Terengganu State Assembly being 14 seats for BN, opposition 15 and Independents, three.

The situation is seen as a lesson for BN on the need to select leaders who are truly loyal and prioritised the party's interest over personal interest.

Umno Information chief Datuk Ahmad Maslan stressed that loyalty and obedience to party was important in deciding the rise and fall of a political party at every level including state.

"Umno needs leaderships at all levels to adhere to the principle 'United, Loyalty, Serving' as enshrined in the slogan of the party," he told Bernama here, today.

"Leaders come and go, but the struggle for race, religion and country is forever," said Ahmad.

According to Ahmad, the new MB must be given a chance to carry out his duty, including seeking a solution to the crisis.

"The dissolution of the State Assembly is a last choice if negotiation fails," he said.

Echoing the same points, Universiti Malaya Terengganu (UMT) Socioeconomy Development Centre director Prof Dr Ibrahim Mamat said the political situation in Terengganu arose because of dissatisfaction and was overly personal in nature.

"The selection of leaders is important, we do not want leaders who leave the party when their demands are not entertained," he stressed.

For Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) Political and International Studies lecturer Md Shukri Shuib, Ahmad's actions could be seen as a betrayal and an embarrassment to BN in a state which is rich in oil and gas.

National Council of Professors' Heritage and Socio-Cultural History Cluster head

Prof Datuk Dr Zainal Kling is of the view that the immaturity of some elected representatives resulted in them willing to burn the bridge if they were deprived of power.

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