

Ku Li: Corruption may see BN's downfall

Written by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah
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Razaleigh pointed that no 'public relations exercises' can mask corruption and 'dysfunctional democracy'.

KUALA LUMPUR: Respected Umno veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah today said no government rife with corruption can survive public anger and warned Putrajaya that it may suffer the same fate as ousted regimes in the Arab Spring.

Speaking at the Royal Selangor Club luncheon talk earlier today, the Kelantan prince spoke of Malaysia's "dysfunctional" political economy, which he blamed on money politics as a result of the of the policies under the tenure of former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Malaysia under Mahathir is often characterised by neo-liberal policies which Razaleigh said kickstarted the politics-business relations and resulted in crony capitalism.

"As a consequence of economic policies in the past, inequalities have also widened. Today, Malaysians suffer from a very wide inequality... and the widening inequality will go into a deeper crisis of confidence among the people.

"No democratic system, no institution as envisaged by our Federal Constitution, can survive a political economy of this nature.

"There is too much money in politics and it has become inseparable from power and the electoral process," he said.

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Razaleigh, the Gua Musang MP, often described as “the country’s last statesman”, has been vociferous in his criticism against the Najib administration and his own party Umno.

He had helped set up Angkatan Amanah Merdeka (Amanah), an NGO aimed at rekindling the spirit of the Federal Constitution.

But observers say he is using it as a platform to put pressure on the ruling coalition to clean up and buck up.

Lesson from the Arab Spring

His deputy in Amanah, a former minister and a senior Umno member, Sheikh Kadir Fadzil, had also been vocal against the Najib government.

He claimed leaders from the ruling party practised widespread money politics to win votes and posts in party elections.

International observers and economists say corruption remains the biggest problem in Malaysia, denting the country’s economic edge and repelling investments.

Foreign direct investments to Malaysia have dropped significantly as investors now opt for its neighbours.

Razaleigh said that no “public relations exercises” can mask corruption and “dysfunctional democracy”, citing the bloody Arab Spring that saw voters ousting governments that had ruled for decades.

“The lesson we have to learn from the Arab Spring is that a dysfunctional democracy, however

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well dressed by public relations exercises or subsequently by the media, cannot withstand the realities... of the abuse of power and wanton accumulation of wealth.

“That is the most important message, I think, that the Arab Spring has conveyed and we must take cognizance of it,” he said.

written by Syed Jaymal Zahiid (Free Malaysia Today)

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