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Razaleigh-Cabinet

I WAS NOT OFFERED CABINET POST, SAYS RAZALEIGH

KOTA BAHARU, Dec 11 (Bernama) -- Kelantan Umno chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said today he was not offered a Cabinet post but he does not mind as he can concentrate on party work.

"No... probably I did not meet the criteria set by the prime minister," he said when asked if he was called upon to join the Cabinet.

Speaking to reporters after arriving from Kuala Lumpur, Razaleigh said he was not in politics just to become a minister.

"I'm a gurkha...I was a gurkha then and I'm still a gurkha. I can also play a role to help the leaders if I'm still needed," he said with a smile.

The former finance minister said he was happy to be outside the Cabinet as he could focus on boosting Malay support for Umno following the decline in support seen in last month's general election.

Razaleigh expressed satisfaction with the new Cabinet announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday.

"The people appointed are those who meet the criteria set by the prime minister and I am satisfied with the new Cabinet.

"He (Dr Mahathir) has a team that can help him lead the country for our future," he said.

On the absence of representatives from Kelantan in the Cabinet, Razaleigh said he accepted Dr Mahathir's explanation that at present no one from the state could be appointed because Umno's quota in the Dewan Negara was full.

(To appoint someone from Kelantan, the person -- except for Razaleigh who was the only Umno candidate in the state to win a parliamentary seat -- would have to be made a member of the Dewan Negara first.)

On the inclusion of Datuk Rais Yatim in the Cabinet, Razaleigh said Rais could play a role in assisting the prime minister.

Razaleigh was the president of Parti Melayu Semangat 46 and Rais the deputy president before the party was dissolved and its members returned to Umno.

-- BERNAMA

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