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Leaders welcome Tengku Razaleigh's new position

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah's appointment as Kelantan Umno chief will help Barisan Nasional to wrest control of the State from Pas in the coming general election, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today.

"His appointment gives us hope that the people of the State would support Umno and help the Barisan Nasional to defeat Pas in the coming general election which is the party's main agenda.

"I believe Tengku Razaleigh's ability as a politician and his experience will put him in good stead to lead Kelantan Umno and Barisan Nasional component parties," he told reporters after chairing the Cabinet Committee on Rural Development at the Putrajaya Complex today.

In Serian, Tengku Razaleigh's deputy Datuk Annuar Musa said it was good news for Umno members and the people in Kelantan.

"Tengku Razaleigh is a capable leader and can help strengthen Kelantan.

"Personally, I accept the appointment as good news," he added.

Speaking to reporters after the opening of the new Kemas nursery building at Kampung Melayu Hilir here, Annuar said the main priority now was to find ways to champion the cause of the Kelantan people so they would not be left behind in terms of development and politics.

Annuar, who is also Rural Development Minister, said the appointment of Tengku Razaleigh meant that the Umno leadership, especially Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, had set aside the differences he had with the former Finance Minister.

He added the priority now was to further strengthen the party.

"A stronger party can form a good Government to carry out development for the people," he said, adding that what Umno tried to do was to look for ways to save the people in Kelantan from Pas' rule.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak advised all members to accept the appointment as Dr Mahathir would have undoubtedly studied all aspects of the matter before making the decision.

"The appointment is at the discretion of the party president and it is obvious that Dr Mahathir considers Tengku Razaleigh a leader who is suitable to be entrusted with the responsibilities of leading the party in Kelantan.

"As party members, we should all accept the appointment as our objective is party unity above all other considerations," said Najib, who is also Umno vice-president.

In Shah Alam, Selangor Umno is prepared to throw their support behind Tengku Razaleigh for the forthcoming general election and also to win the support of Kelantan people for Umno and Barisan Nasional.

Selangor Umno chairman Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar in congratulating Tengku Razaleigh for his appointment said Dr Mahathir had chosen a person who had vast administrative, political experience and knowledge.

"Tengku Razaleigh has also a good working relationship with the people in Kelantan including in Umno and Barisan Nasional. I am confident he will successfully implement the heavy responsibility entrusted to him," he told reporters after launching Shell's first regional Oil Products Retail Training Academy at Batu Tiga today.

Meanwhile, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir described the appointment as the best decision which could enable Barisan Nasional to take over the State from Pas.

"There is renewed spirit and will to win Kelantan with the appointment,"  
he told reporters here today.

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