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Women power crucial, says Razaleigh

KOTA BARU, Fri. - Women power can help to bring down the Pas Government in Kelantan, State Umno liaison chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said today.

He said women made up 54 per cent of voters in Kelantan and he believed that through solidarity and unity, they could bring about much-needed changes for the State and people.

"The biggest political power in Kelantan is not Pas or Umno, but women power," he said.

Speaking at a women's gathering at Wakaf Che Yeh, Tengku Razaleigh said Umno recognised women's capabilities and this was reflected in the various positions and posts being given to them.

"Umno does not regard women as second-class citizens.

"They too, are capable of becoming election candidates or being involved in the nation's policy-making," he added.

He refuted the statement by Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat that the State Government did not want to employ beautiful women as they could easily find rich husbands.

"Women who work do so not for the income but to contribute to the nation," he said.

Kelantan women, he said, would have a bright future under a Barisan Nasional government.

"A government which undermines economic development is a killer of our family institutions and wants to see women dependent on men for the rest of their lives.

"Do not be a slave to this group. We must rise and topple them now," he said.

Tengku Razaleigh pledged to rectify all the weaknesses of the Pas State Government if Barisan Nasional was to be voted into power after the coming election.

Also present were Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paduka Ibrahim Ali, Umno Wanita chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman and State Wanita leader Zaleha Hussein.

Tengku Razaleigh also called on the many Kelantan voters living in other States to return and cast their votes.

On Kelantan Umno candidates, Tengku Razaleigh said he would submit the list to party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"It will also be up to the party president to decide on the number of women candidates to be fielded here," he said when asked whether women would be given more seats to contest in the State.

Earlier in her speech, Siti Zaharah called on women in Kelantan to unite and help ensure a BN victory in the election.

She said they should realise that no government other than the BN was capable of looking after their interests as well as bringing about positive changes for the benefit of the people.

"Kelantan women should no longer allow themselves to be discriminated against nor deprived of progress or opportunities to live a better life," she added.

She believed that with confidence and a willingness to work, they could bring about changes and topple the Pas State Government.

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