

23 MAR 2000

Razaleigh-Candidate

I HAVE NO PLANS TO CONTEST- RAZALEIGH

KUALA LUMPUR, March 23 (Bernama) -- Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said today he has no plans to contest any top Umno post in the party elections in May.

He said even if he exceeded the required number of nominations for contesting, he would not become a candidate.

This represents Tengku Razaleigh's clearest statement of his position following speculation that he would contest one of the top posts in the party elections.

"Actually I do not have any plans to go for any top seat in Umno even if I my nominations exceed the required limit," he said.

On March 9, a question mark was still hanging over Tengku Razaleigh's stand when he issued a statement that he "could not run away from responsibilities in Umno if it was within his capabilities."

So far of the 80 of the 165 Umno divisions which had held their delegates conferences, 79 had nominated Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the posts of party president and deputy president respectively while Tengku Razaleigh had obtained only one nomination each for both posts.

A person needs at least 50 nominations to contest the president's post and at least 33 nominations for the deputy president's post.

Most of the Umno divisions which have not held their conferences to make the nominations would do so on Sunday.

On the attempts by certain groups to nominate him, he said "Perhaps their intention is to embarrass me."

However he said there was no strong evidence to support this claim. "I am merely saying there may be groups out there to pit me against the leadership and perhaps there may be none."

Tengku Razaleigh said he would not do anything even though several groups were throwing his name around as a candidate to contest against the country's top leaders.

"I will be like this....if anyone comes to talk to me..I will just talk," he said.

On the Sanggang state by-election on April 1, Tengku Razaleigh said the Barisan Nasional Government had a good chance of winning.

"What is important is the way our candidate conducts his campaign. I believe that those entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the campaign will employ all strategies to win the hearts of the voters. God willing we will win."

Those involved in the campaign should also give attention to the more than 1,000 new voters as well as the Chinese community which made up 38 per cent of the electorate in the constituency.

"As to who they are supporting, we have yet to know. However I do not think that PAS has a greater influence among the Chinese there. It is illogical for them to support PAS," he said.

This however did not mean that the BN candidate was banking on the Chinese vote to ensure his victory in the by-election.

"What we hope is that they vote as Malaysians irrespective of they being Malays, Chinese or Indians," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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