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Ku Li qualifies to contest veep post

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KOTA BARU, Fri. - Kelantan Umno liaison chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah has got the required number of nominations to qualify to contest the post of party vice-president when the Gua Musang Umno division committee decided to nominate him for the post today.

With the nomination, Tengku Razaleigh now has 17 nominations.

This makes him eligible to contest for the vice-presidency at the Umno election next month.

Tengku Razaleigh's nomination was announced by Gua Musang Umno deputy chief Saufi Deraman after the divisional committee meeting at the State Umno building.

Also nominated to vie for the three vice-president posts were Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam.

The meeting was held to decide on the nominees following a decision at the Gua Musang Umno delegates meeting on March 31 to leave the nominations to the division committee members.

The delegates had unanimously decided to leave the nomination to the committee because they felt the committee members were in a better position to know best whom to nominate.

Saufi said the committee members also unanimously agreed to nominate Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for party president and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for deputy president.

He said the decision to nominate Tengku Razaleigh was made after considering the desire of the division members to have him (Tengku Razaleigh) play a bigger role, especially at the central level.

"Tengku Razaleigh does not want and refused to be nominated. However, on the request of party members and colleagues in the State and outside Kelantan who want him (Tengku Razaleigh) to play a bigger role at the central level, the Gua Musang Umno division committee members, unanimously decided to nominate him for the post of vice-president," he added.

Earlier, Tengku Razaleigh told reporters the decision of the division committee meeting was made after taking into consideration the views of all quarters.

He said the division's decision on the nominations would be submitted to the party's headquarters as soon possible.

Later, asked on the committee's decision in nominating him for the vice-presidency, Tengku Razaleigh said it was not within his means to stop them from doing so.

"I allowed them to nominate me because of their desire to see me play a bigger role at the central level and also to have me qualify to contest for the post and that I only needed just another nomination to be eligible.

"However, it has also been agreed that they will accept my final decision on the matter," he added.

Tengku Razaleigh said he would discuss with committee members of his (Gua Musang Umno) division and colleagues before deciding whether or not to contest for the post.

Responding to a question as to why he had earlier refused to be nominated, Tengku Razaleigh said he would be issuing a statement to clarify on his earlier stand later on.

In Kuching, Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamad Khalil Yaacob said the decision by the Gua Musang division in nominating Dr Mahathir and Abdullah for the two top posts indicated that the division respected the wishes of the supreme council.

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