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Lack of support from Beaufort, Muar for Tengku Razaleigh

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Attempts to nominate Kelantan Umno chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah to contest the post of deputy president at the May party elections failed at both the Beaufort division in Sabah and Bakri in Muar, Johor, today due to lack of support.

At the Beaufort meeting, the attempt was made by division vice-head Mohd Zahari Mohd Zinin.

Although the situation at the Pa Musa Hall was tense, the meeting continued with delegates nominating Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the post of president and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the vice president's post.

The commotion began soon after a resolution was passed for divisional head Datuk Lajim Ukin to list candidates to contest for top posts in the party.

Beaufort MP Datuk Anifah Aman had proposed that Lajim be given the mandate to list candidates for the post of permanent chairman, deputy permanent chairman, president, deputy president, vice presidents and 25 supreme council members, apart from choosing seven delegates for the election in Kuala Lumpur.

Beaufort division permanent chairman, Abdul Malek Unar, then proposed the resolution to delegates at the meeting and delegates agreed by a show of hands.

At that point, Mohd Zahari asked for permission from Abdul Malek to say a few words.

The request was denied, but Mohd Zahari walked to the rostrum and agreed to the resolution, except for the post of deputy president.

Mohd Zahari proposed Tengku Razaleigh be nominated for the post of deputy president, adding that party members should be allowed the freedom to choose leaders.

While Mohd Zahari spoke, division treasurer Datuk John O.T. Ghani and some delegates in the hall stood up and told Zahari to sit down so that the meeting could be continued.

Abdul Malek then asked for support from delegates by a show of hands to allow Lajim to continue listing names of candidates for the top posts. Abdul Malek declared that Mohd Zahari's proposal should be rejected because more than two thirds of delegates supported the resolution earlier proposed by Anifah.

Mohd Zahari tried to get permission to speak once again but was not allowed by Abdul Malek.

He then left the meeting with a few Umno members.

The division nominated Sabah party chief and Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam, incumbent Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Johor Umno chief and Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman for the posts of vice-president. Two other divisions which held their meetings today - Libaran and Tenom - also nominated Osu and Najib for the post of vice-president.

However, the third candidate for vice-president in Libaran was Foreign Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar and in Tenom the candidate was Negri Sembilan party chief and Menteri Besar Tan Sri Isa Abdul Samad.

Libaran and Tenom also nominated Dr Mahathir and Abdullah for the top two posts respectively.

All three divisions nominated Tan Sri Sulaiman Ninam Shah for the post of permanent chairman while Beaufort and Libaran nominated Sandakan

divisional head Datuk Ampong Puyong for the post of deputy permanent chairman.

The Tenom division however nominated Datuk Ikhwan Nasir for the post of deputy permanent chairman.

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