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No snowball effect - Razaleigh fails to get more nominations for top posts

JELI, Sat. - The move by the Tanah Merah Umno division to nominate Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah for both the president and deputy president posts yesterday failed to create a snowball effect on four Umno divisions which met today.

Instead, all four, including three from Kelantan, chose to heed the no-contest advice from the supreme council and nominated Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the two posts respectively.

The divisions that met today were Jeli, Kuala Krai and Peringat, all in Kelantan, and Padang Terap in Kedah.

With the nominations, both Dr Mahathir and Abdullah have each secured 21 nominations for the posts of president and deputy president respectively. So far, 22 divisions have met, and only Tanah Merah has given the nominations for the two posts to Tengku Razaleigh.

Tomorrow, at least 29 divisions are scheduled to hold their meetings, the biggest number of meetings held in one day since the process started on March 2.

At the Jeli division, delegates unanimously nominated Dr Mahathir and Abdullah for the two posts after it was proposed by its chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and seconded by his deputy Mohd Adhan Kechik.

Mustapa, who is the Economic Adviser at the Finance Ministry, also nominated Tengku Razaleigh, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Datuk Ghani Othman for the three vice-president posts.

With that, Tengku Razaleigh has received two nominations for vice-president, the other coming from the Grik division in Perak last week. A total of 317 delegates attended the meeting, held at the Jeli Umno complex at Bukit Nangka.

At the Kuala Krai meeting, there was an attempt to emulate Tanah Merah's move yesterday when a delegate proposed Tengku Razaleigh's name for both the posts of president and deputy president.

However, when put to vote, only 59 votes went to Tengku Razaleigh while 123 went to Dr Mahathir and Abdullah.

The division also nominated Najib, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar for the vice-presidency.

The Peringat division also nominated Dr Mahathir and Abdullah for the top two party posts while the candidates nominated for the vice-president posts were Syed Hamid, Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib and Najib.

In Kuala Nerang, an attempt to nominate Tengku Razaleigh for the post of Umno deputy president by a delegate from the Padang Terap division failed when no one seconded the motion.

This resulted in delegates from the division passing a unanimous resolution supporting the Umno supreme council's advice that there should be no contest for the top two party posts and nominated Dr Mahathir and Abdullah.

Tengku Razaleigh's nomination came from Kuala Pai Selatan branch delegate, Abdul Wahab Hashim. However, the chairman of the meeting discarded the proposal when no one seconded it.

Nominations for the party vice-presidents posts went to Najib, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Muhammad.

Earlier, division chief Datuk Dr Affifudin Omar told delegates they should not misconstrue the supreme council's no-contest advice as a ban or

directive. He said it was up to them to decide if they wanted to nominate someone for any post.

"Contests are a normal process in a democratic party and we are a democratic party," he added.

Meanwhile, in Alor Star, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain said he was confident all Umno divisions in the State would nominate Dr Mahathir and Abdullah for the top two posts.

"We (Umno Kedah) still stress that the top two posts need not be contested in line with the supreme council's advice.

"If divisions in other States want to nominate different people for the post, it is democracy," he said.

Asked if all divisions in the State would abide by the supreme council's advice, Syed Razak said: "I am confident... we have information that the divisions will nominate Dr Mahathir for president and Abdullah for deputy."

On the Tanah Merah Umno division's decision to nominate Razaleigh for the top two posts, Syed Razak said:

"We hope this nomination (for Tengku Razaleigh) will not have a strong effect on the unity of the party."

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