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Razaleigh has 'no plans yet' to contest

KOTA BARU, Thurs. - State Umno liaison committee chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said today he has no plans yet to contest for any post in the party elections in May.

"I have not even thought about the matter as I'm not important, but only a gurkha. Considering the views made by some people that important posts in the party should only be held by ministers and deputy ministers, I do not fulfil the criteria," he told reporters at the State Umno building today.

In Ipoh yesterday, State liaison committee chairman Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali said Perak Umno would propose that only Ministers and Deputy Ministers contest supreme council seats.

Tajol Rosli, who is Menteri Besar, added that the proposal was aimed at preventing unnecessary contests.

On Monday, the Umno supreme council advised members to avoid promoting contests for the top two posts in the party to avoid intense campaigning which could lead to disunity. It unanimously proposed that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad be re-nominated as president while vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi be nominated to fill the vacant deputy president's post.

Tengku Razaleigh said his concern now was to pass on to Umno divisions in Kelantan the supreme council's no-contest advice.

He added that the State liaison committee would meet after Hari Raya to discuss the no-contest advice and for it to be passed on to the divisions.

In Alor Star yesterday, Dr Mahathir had stated that Umno members were not forced to adopt the supreme council's advice. He had also stated that it was a decision made by the council and the members had the right not to abide by it.

Tengku Razaleigh said since the supreme council decision was announced, various quarters have given their views on the matter.

He said many supported the decision to avoid a split in the party while some objected to it. He added it was a good exercise in democracy in Umno because it could produce new talents and provide opportunities for everybody to express their views.

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