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Razaleigh gets first nomination for top two Umno posts from Tanah Merah division

Nik Imran Abdullah

TANAH MERAH, Fri. - In an unexpected move, the Tanah Merah Umno division today nominated Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah for the posts of both party president and deputy president.

The Kelantan Umno chief's name was proposed by division chief Datuk Hashim Safin Hamzah and supported by Taman Adabi branch chief Ilias Ismail.

However, the division's committee member Mohd Noor Jaafar named Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the number one and number two party posts respectively.

Mohd Noor, an RTM deejay in Kota Baru, also called on the delegates to abide by the supreme council's advice that there should be no contest for the posts of president and deputy president.

When voting was done through a show of hands, those favouring Tengku Razaleigh outnumbered those for Dr Mahathir and Abdullah.

Hashim later told reporters that the nomination of Tengku Razaleigh was not against the party constitution which allowed a member to be nominated for any post.

"This is not a question of protest or of being extreme, but to give a chance to Tengku Razaleigh to choose either one of the posts and to decide what he thinks is best for him.

"This is the desire of the delegates," he said.

Hashim, who is also a former senator, proposed Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib and Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar to contest the three vice-president posts.

Hashim said if there was a contest for the post of president, it should be done in the most "appropriate" manner.

"If there is a contest for the presidency, it will strengthen the incumbent's position if he wins."

He said this also applied to Abdullah as this would be the acid test for him to get a mandate from the delegates.

"This is normal in a democracy and Umno members are intelligent enough to choose leaders.

"I believe we are not alone in nominating Tengku Razaleigh for the top posts as there are other divisions willing to follow."

Meanwhile, Abdullah, an Umno vice-president, when asked about the possibility that Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah might contest a top Umno post in the party elections, said: "That is his choice."

Abdullah said this after attending a charity dinner of the SP Setia Foundation in Petaling Jaya tonight.

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