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VP nomination is 'best compromise'

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KAMPAR, Sat. - The proposal to Umno divisions in Perak, Kedah and Perlis to nominate Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah for vice-president in the May elections is the "best compromise", Perak Umno chief Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali said today.

He said Tengku Razaleigh should not view it as "a slap in the face" but as a means to unite Umno and an opportunity for him to hold a high party post.

"Umno cannot afford another internal crisis. Tengku Razaleigh should not feel belittled.

"It is a senior post. Even I dare not run for it," he told reporters after opening the annual general meeting of Yayasan Addin, a religious foundation.

Yesterday, Tajol, along with the State Umno chairmen and Menteri Besar of Perlis Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim and Kedah Datuk Syed Razak Syed Zain agreed to ask divisions in their States to nominate Tengku Razaleigh for the vice-president's post.

Shahidan had said disunity could occur if the divisions nominated the Kelantan Umno chief for president or deputy president.

However, it is learnt that some divisions in the three States felt that nominating Tengku Razaleigh for the vice-presidency was "not appropriate" as he was a senior Umno member and has held the vice-president's post before.

Tajol Rosli said the proposal to nominate Tengku Razaleigh was "just a guideline" and divisions were "free to make their own choices".

"We are not even certain if party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad agrees to it," he said.

Tajol Rosli admitted that by making such a proposal, they risked losing support from some of the divisions which rejected the idea, "but it was made in the interests of the party and unity".

He also hoped the move would avoid the emergence of "teams" within the party before and after the elections.

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