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Umno-Election (Kelantan)

ALL 14 DIVISION CHIEFS IN KELANTAN SEEKING RE-ELECTION

KOTA BAHARU, April 5 (Bernama) -- The Umno divisional elections in Kelantan beginning tomorrow will see all 14 division chiefs defending their posts for a new term.

Of the total, five division heads have retained their posts when they were the sole candidates nominated by the branches.

Topping the list of division chiefs, who have been returned unopposed, are Kelantan Umno liaison head Datuk Mustapa Mohamed (Jeli), Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Gua Musang), Datuk Annuar Musa (Peringat), Datuk Ibrahim Ali (Pasir Mas) and Tuan Hashim Tuan Yaacob (Kubang Kerian).

The fate of other division leaders would be known in two weeks.

They are Mat Zin Ismail (Rantau Panjang), Datuk Hashim Safin (Tanah Merah), Datuk Ahmad Shahibuddin Mohd Nor (Bachok), Datuk Wan Zaid Wan Abdullah (Kuala Krai), Datuk Ariffin Abdul Hamid (Pengkalan Chepa), Kamaruddin Mohd Noor (Pasir Puteh), Ismail Mamat (Machang), Mansor Salleh (Tumpat) and Datuk Ahmad Rastom Ahmad Maher (Kota Baharu).

Judging from the number of nominations received, most of the incumbents are expected to retain their positions albeit the keen contest.

An exciting fight is taking shape in the Rantau Panjang division with the re-emergence of Umno veteran Tan Sri Hussein Ahmad, who is also the former division head, to take on incumbent Mat Zin in a three-way tussle.

The other contestant is Razali Ismail.

Hussein, who is the Kemubu Agricultural Development Authority (KADA) chairman, had declared a few years ago that he was retiring from active politics but had a sudden change of mind in a month or two.

He was among the first to announce openly that he would contest for the division chief's post.

He told BERNAMA that his age was not a stumbling block to serve Umno and that he was offering himself for the post as he felt responsible to rebuild Kelantan Umno which had lost to PAS in three general elections.

In Pasir Puteh, incumbent Kamaruddin, the former Semerak assemblyman, is being challenged by former Machang MP Datuk Shukri Mohamed and Rozali Mohamed.

Realising that the intense jostling for posts would cause a split in Umno, Mustapa had from the very beginning advised the divisional leaders to work out a compromise.

However, the keen tussle for posts was evident with almost all the 14 divisions receiving complaints and faced problems at the branch level, many of which had not been solved till now.

As many nominations from branches were cancelled at the last minute owing to technical problems, the Gua Musang youth delegates meeting scheduled for tomorrow had been postponed.

Instead, the division's delegates conference would be held first to be opened by Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Saturday.

-- BERNAMA

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