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New blood part of Umno's bid to recapture Kelantan

KOTA BARU, Thurs. - The new Kelantan Umno liaison committee line-up, announced by party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today, is part of efforts to strengthen the State Umno to enable it to recapture the State from Pas.

Several State Umno leaders said the changes were also to meet the aspirations of the people who wished to see fresh faces and leaders working as a team.

Gua Musang Umno chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said the new appointments were to strengthen the State Umno.

"Hopefully, party members will accept the decision while those appointed must play their roles effectively and co-operate with each other."

He said Umno itself must accept the change.

Tengku Razaleigh, who is an Umno supreme council member, said there were many ways to recapture Kelantan.

"It is the prerogative of the (party) president to change leaders. Those who have been picked should co-operate with other party members at all levels and must also show their effectiveness."

Peringat Umno chief Annuar Musa, who was replaced as State deputy Umno chief, said what was important was to ensure Umno's victory in the State in the next general election.

"Umno is a political party. What is important is that the party must win and not 'groups' which want to see individual victories."

He said sacrifices were needed in order to achieve this.

"The question of who comes and goes should not be made an issue. It should be seen as party strategy."

Annuar said he accepted in good faith the party's decision to replace him with Kota Baru Umno chief Zaid Ibrahim.

"I have been in the position for 12 years and it is only proper that new blood takes over.

"I have been the deputy when Dr Mahathir was the liaison chief between 1990-1998, Tengku Razaleigh (1999) and Datuk Mustapa Mohamed.

"Although I no longer hold that position, I am still a member of the liaison committee, a division head and a supreme council member," he added.

He urged all party members and divisional leaders to give their full support to the changes.

Meanwhile, Mustapa said he would convene the first meeting of the State liaison committee in two or three weeks.