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# Razaleigh wants to lead Umno

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KOTA BARU: Gua Musang Member of Parliament Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah yesterday offered himself to take over the leadership of Umno following its less than impressive showing in the elections.

While acknowledging that his advancing age might be against him, the 71-year-old former finance minister expressed his willingness "to come to the forefront" if he was given the chance.

Tengku Razaleigh, who had challenged and lost to former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the Umno presidency in 1987, said he was young then and ever ready to challenge anyone with his ideas.

"Now I still have ideas, am still brave because I am independent as I don't depend on anyone. If my services are still needed and my strength can still be used, I am offering myself to work for the rakyat.

"Even though I am old I am still strong. If there are enough nominations for me to contest in the Umno election, I will give my services if needed," he said at a press conference.

Tengku Razaleigh who described Umno's performance in the general election as the most painful and horrible moment in his political career, said he would call for a meeting at his division today to discuss his proposal for the party to hold a special meeting.

He had recently sent letters to all Umno division and branch heads urging them to invoke a clause in the party's constitution to call for an extraordinary meeting on May 11, the party's anniversary, to discuss the matter.

"Haven't Umno members realised we've lost five states? Are they still sleeping?" he asked.

On the New Economic Policy (NEP), he claimed the matter was being questioned because some quarters tasked with implementing it had abused their powers.