

Ali Rustam Refutes Withdrawal Speculation
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21 (Bernama) -- Former Chief Minister of Melaka Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam has refuted the speculation about him withdrawing from the UMNO vice-president's race when he submitted his nomination form at around 4 pm.

He explained that he was late in submitting the form because he could not find a suitable representative to submit it to UMNO election secretariat on his behalf.

"However, I have submitted my nomination form to contest for the vice-president's post at about 4 pm. I can assure you that the report (about me withdrawing my candidacy) is merely a speculation," he told reporters when met at the Putra World Trade Centre in the capital.

When asked to comment further about the speculation, Mohd Ali, clad in blue batik shirt, said: "Anything can happen...each candidate has 72 hours (cooling period)."

Mohd Ali, who is confident that he has a good chance to win the post, said he had offered himself because he wanted to uphold Malay rights, Islam and the overall human rights as stipulated in the Federal Constitution.

When asked whether other challengers for the post, especially Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Mukhriz Tun Mahathir, could affect his chances, Mohd Ali said they all had equal chances now.

"All of us have contributed to the party and to the government. We all have good track records," he said.

The three UMNO incumbent vice-presidents, namely Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein and Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, had also submitted their forms to defend their seats.

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