

Dr Mahathir, Abdullah increase tally

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today received another nomination, bringing their tally to 17 each for the posts of Umno president and deputy president.

The latest came from Sik in Kedah which held its meeting today.

The division also nominated incumbent Datuk Seri Najib Tun Ra-

zak, Johor party chief and Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and his Selangor counterpart Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar for vice-presidents. The Sik division is also the first to follow the supreme council's decision yesterday that divisions name in full the candidates for all posts to be contested in the May party election.

Najib, who is Defence Minister, retains his lead position for the vice-presidency having secured 16 nominations so far. He is followed

closely by Abdul Ghani with 13 nominations. Sik is the first of the 15 Umno divisions in Kedah to hold its meeting.

It also nominated Tan Sri Sulaiman Ninam Shah for permanent chairman and Pokok Sena Umno division deputy chief Wan Hanafiah Wan Mat Saman for deputy permanent chairman.

Sik Umno chairman Datuk Paduka Dr Abdul Hamid Othman was among the 25 nominated for the supreme council posts.

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In Jitra, Kubang Pasu Umno Youth at its meeting tonight nominated Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein for Youth chief and Zein Ismail, his deputy. Hishammuddin received 125 votes while Datuk Annuar Musa polled 26 votes.

Zein's nomination was a close one with 67 votes against 65 polled by Datuk Abd Aziz Sheikh Fadzir.

Candidates for the presidency must secure a minimum of 50 nominations (30 per cent) to enable them to contest; 33 nominations (20 per

cent) for deputy president, 17 (10 per cent) for the three contested posts of vice-president and eight nominations (five per cent) for the 25 elected supreme council posts.

The next round of meetings is scheduled for Saturday involving the Jeli and Tanah Merah (Kelantan), Kinabatangan (Sabah) and Padang Terap (Kedah) divisions. All the 165 divisions have until the end of April to convene their annual delegates meetings to make their nominations.