

13/03/2000

26 more for Dr M, Abdullah (HL)

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Twenty-six Umno divisions which met today, the biggest number to hold their meetings in a single day, gave unequivocal support to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

All nominated the two for president and deputy president respectively. In fact, delegates attending the divisions' meetings held all over the country were unanimous in their support for the two leaders - without any attempt to propose anyone else for the posts.

With the outcome of the meetings today, Dr Mahathir is only three short of securing the minimum 50 nominations or the 30 per cent required to qualify to defend his presidency.

In the case of Abdullah, having secured 47 nominations, he is eligible to contest the vacant deputy presidency. The eligibility for the post is 20 per cent or 33 nominations.

Since March 2, 48 of the 165 divisions have concluded their meetings. Thus far, only Kelantan Umno chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah has been nominated for both president and deputy president.

The nominations came on Friday from Tanah Merah, a division in his home State of Kelantan.

Tengku Razaleigh was nominated for vice-president by the Grik division in Perak and Padang Terap division in Kedah. Today, the Padang Besar division in Perlis nominated him for a supreme council seat.

For the vice-presidency race, only two candidates have secured the required eligibility percentage - incumbent Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman. Najib passed the tape for minimum requirement on Friday while Ghani made it today.

The eligibility to contest the vice-presidency is 10 per cent or 17 nominations. Najib has 45 to his name while Ghani has 28.

Getting close to the mark is Selangor Umno chief and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar who has 16 nominations. Sabah Umno chairman and Chief Minister Datuk Seri Osu Sukam came next, with 12.

In the Wanita Umno, Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, the main challenger for the movement's top post has passed the 20 per cent requirement while incumbent Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman is still struggling to secure hers.

Similarly for the deputy Wanita chief's post, only one candidate Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil had secured the 15 per cent requirement while the other two candidates - incumbent Datuk Napsiah Omar and Aionon Khairiyah Mohd Abas - have yet to cross the mark.

In the race for Umno Youth chief, Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein looks set for a smooth path having secured the 25 per cent required nominations yesterday. The other candidate is Tanjung Youth head Raja Munir Shah Raja Mustapha in Penang who received only one nomination - from his own division.

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