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Dr Mahathir qualifies for bid to retain Umno presidency

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad secured four more nominations today, qualifying him to contest for the Umno presidency in the May 11 party elections.

The nominations came from the Beaufort, Tenom and Libaran divisions in Sabah and Bakri in Johor. This brings to 51 the number of nominations he has received since the divisional meetings commenced on March 2.

Vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also had four more nominations to bring his tally to 51. Abdullah, who is carrying out the duties of deputy president, has already qualified to contest the number two post.

To contest the presidency, a candidate must obtain at least 50 nominations (30 per cent) while a candidate for deputy president needs 33 (20 per cent).

More than one-fourth of the 165 divisions have held their meetings so far.

Kelantan State Umno Liaison chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah was also proposed at the Beaufort division in Sabah and the Bakri division in Muar, but the move was rejected by members.

He has only received one nomination each for the post of president and deputy president - both from Tanah Merah in Kelantan.

The Jeli division (in Kelantan) and Grik (Perak) had nominated him for vice-president, while Padang Besar picked him for a supreme council seat. Front-running vice-presidential candidate Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak continued to remain the favourite for the party's third highest post. Nominations for Najib rose to 49 when all four divisions which met today gave their support.

Najib, an incumbent, is followed by Johor Umno chief and Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, who has obtained 31 nominations - two from Beaufort and Bakri today.

Both have surpassed the minimum requirement of nominations from at least 10 per cent of the entire 165 divisions or 17 divisions to qualify for contest of the elected three third highest posts.

Sabah Umno chief and Chief Minister Datuk Seri Osu Sukam needs two more nominations to qualify for the post; supreme council member Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar needed five more and Negri Sembilan Umno chief and Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad requires an additional seven. Another 26 divisions will hold their meetings tomorrow.

Acting Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein obtained nominations for the movement's top post from all the 14 Umno Youth divisions which met today, bringing his tally to 95.

Youth executive council member Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir received 12 nominations for the youth's second highest post today, bringing the total number of nominations for him so far to 74.

Another aspirant for the movement's number two position, exco member Zein Isma Ismail, today received two nominations bringing his tally to 17. He needs 25 divisions or 15 per cent of the 165 divisions.

Wanita Umno former chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz has obtained 55 for the wanita number one post, including nine today, while incumbent Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman received 37, including seven today.

For the position of Wanita Umno vice-head, incumbent Datuk Napsiah Omar received nine nominations, including one today.

Supreme council member Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil now has 56 while Ainin Khairiyah Datuk Mohd Abas, who is Perak Wanita Umno head got 27 including five today.

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