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Higher tally for Dr M, Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - As the Umno division meetings approach the half-way mark, nominations for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the posts of president and deputy president continue to build up.

Today, 27 more divisions held their meetings and all nominated the two leaders.

Dr Mahathir and Abdullah have now secured nominations from all divisions which held their meetings since March 2, except the Tanah Merah division in Kelantan which nominated State party chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah for both the posts.

There are 86 more divisions which have yet to hold their meetings.

Today's meetings in Sungai Siput, Perak and Kuantan in Pahang, saw moves to propose Tengku Razaleigh for the deputy president's post through secret balloting but these were rejected by the members who chose Abdullah instead.

Proposals by the Umno chiefs of Perak, Kedah and Perlis that Tengku Razaleigh be nominated for the vice-presidency also failed to catch on. Arau, the division led by Perlis Umno chief and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim did not nominate Tengku Razaleigh for the post of vice-president, but named him for a supreme council seat.

This came as a surprise as Shahidan was one of the proponents for Tengku Razaleigh to be nominated for the vice-presidency.

Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali had kept part of the promise when he ensured the Grik division which he led, nominated Tengku Razaleigh as one of the three candidates for the vice-president post.

So far, Tengku Razaleigh has received two nominations for the vice-president post, with the other nomination coming from the Jeli division.