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Perak divisions `to name Dr M, Abdullah'

IPOH, Fri. - All 23 Umno divisions in Perak are expected to heed the supreme council's advice against nominating candidates other than Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the top two posts.

Umno insiders said all the divisions had indicated they would abide by the advice, which is also in line with the aspiration of the State Umno. The State Umno has also proposed that all the divisions nominate incumbent Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak for one of the three vice-president's posts.

The insiders also did not rule out the possibility of Kelantan Umno chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah getting "some nominations" for the vice-presidency.

Others expected to be nominated by Perak divisions for the vice-presidency are Negri Sembilan Umno chief Tan Sri Isa Abdul Samad, Johor party chief Datuk Ghani Othman and supreme council member Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

Two of the divisions, Grik and Batu Gajah, will be the first to hold their delegates' meetings on Sunday. The last two, Bukit Gantang and Kuala Kangsar, will hold theirs on April 2.

However, the Wanita wing is expected to see some "tussle" between supporters of Wanita chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman and those of supreme council member Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, who has offered herself for the Wanita's top post.

Rafidah, who was defeated by Siti Zaharah for the Wanita chief post in 1996, is expected to secure more than 50 per cent of nominations for the top post from Perak divisions.

Among the divisions which have indicated support for the Kuala Kangsar MP are Sungai Siput, Grik, Chenderoh, Tambun, Batu Gajah, Taiping, Gopeng, Ipoh Timur and Ipoh Barat.

Siti Zaharah is expected to get nominations from, among others, Parit, Pasir Salak, Teluk Intan and Bagan Datoh.

Meanwhile, all the Youth divisions are expected to nominate acting Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein as the Youth leader.

The State Youth movement, during its extraordinary meeting last night, endorsed Hishammuddin's nomination for the top post.

The meeting also declared support for State Youth leader Jamal Nasir Rasdi's bid for the Umno Youth permanent chairman post and Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzil's nomination for the vice-chairman post.

The meeting also endorsed the decisions by Kuala Kangsar Umno chief Wan Mohamad Khairil Anwar Wan Ahmad, Tanjung Malim Youth chief Mohd Khushairi Abdul Talib, Sungai Siput Youth chief Dr Shamsul Anuar Sulaiman and Lumut Youth chief Dr Zambry Abd. Kadir to contest for Exco seats.

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