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Eight Umno division leaders expected to be unchallenged

ALOR STAR, Sun. - At least eight of the 15 Kedah Umno division leaders, including Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, are expected to be unchallenged at the party's divisional elections beginning next week.

Umno officials said the eight incumbents secured overwhelming nominations, while their prospective challengers could not get the mandatory minimum nominations.

Aspirants for the top divisional post need a minimum 20 per cent of all branch nominations.

Besides Syed Razak, the seven other division leaders expected to be unopposed are:

Datuk Abdul Rahman Ariffin (Jerlun), Datuk Abu Bakar Taib (Langkawi), Datuk Badruddin Amilrudin (Jerai), Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Othman (Sik), Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir (Kulim/Bandar Baharu), Datuk Mohd Hadzir Ismail (Padang Serai) and Datuk Arzmi Hamid (Merbok).

The party officials based their findings on reports from the 1,759, or 90 per cent, of the 1,937 branches to have completed their meetings as of today.

The source said an average of 10 branches in each division had yet to complete their meetings. Umno branches have until Wednesday to do so.

Of the remaining seven divisions, Baling is expected to see a three-cornered fight while the rest are expected to be straight contests.

Baling Umno division pro-tem chief Ismail Abu Bakar is expected to be challenged by Bayu State Assemblyman Mohd Salleh Yaakob and former Bayu State Assemblyman Datuk Zainol Md Isa.

In Sungai Petani, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Mahadzir Mohd Khir will take on incumbent Abu Bakar Ahmad for the division's top post.

Pokok Sena Umno division pro-tem chief Datuk Ahmad Lebai Sudin is expected to be challenged by Home Affairs Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Paduka Abdul Rahman Ibrahim.

Kuala Nerang State Assemblyman Datuk Dr Afifuddin Omar will take on incumbent Datuk Ghazali Ibrahim for the Padang Terap Umno division chief's post.

In Kubang Pasu, Prime Minister's Department Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Johari Baharum will be vying for the division's top post against incumbent deputy head Tan Sri Osman Aroff. The post was vacated by the retirement of former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Alor Mengkudu State Assemblyman Fadzil Hanafi is to take on incumbent Datuk Ahmad Bashah Hanapiah for the Alor Star Umno division No 1 post.

Former Sungai Tiang State Assemblyman Rozai Shafian will be facing civil servant Azmi Din for the Pendang Umno division top post, after incumbent Datuk Othman Abdul decided to pull out of the race.

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