

Umno nominations take a breather
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Beh Lih Yi

After a roaring start, the pace of nominations at the Umno divisional meetings might slow a bit until the latter part of this week, when another burst of adrenalin-pumping activity can be expected.

Since the official start last Thursday, scores of divisions have met and selected their favourite leaders for top office-bearing posts, which will be contested at the party's annual general assembly in March next year.

This week, another 41 divisions are due to hold their delegates' meetings, mostly on Friday and Saturday.

umno 2009 nomination candidates 131008So far, among winners that have emerged - qualifying to stand for election next year - are vice-presidential hopeful Hishammuddin Hussein, Youth chief aspirant Mukhriz Mahathir, incumbent Wanita chief Rafidah Aziz and her deputy Shahrizat Abdul Jalil who are defending their respective positions.

Eleven divisions have also nominated Shahrizat for the Wanita chief, sparking comments that she may be forced to reconsider a decision not to challenge Rafidah if the nominations snowballed.

Deputy Youth chief aspirants Razali Ibrahim and Reezal Merican Naina Merican both also made it, securing the minimum number of nominations needed to go for the post.

Meanwhile Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has been unchallenged so far. All divisions that have decided have nominated him for the party presidency, which comes with the premiership of the country in tow.

International Trade and Industry Minister Muhyiddin Yassin is frontrunner in the chase for the deputy presidency with 23 nominations. His nearest rival Mohd Ali Rustam has three.

Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Pulai division head Nur Jazlan Muhamed, who separately offered themselves for the No 1 and No 2 posts respectively, have yet to receive any nominations.

Nevertheless, with more than three weeks to go before nominations end on Nov 9, the journey has just begun and further surprises are still possible.