

17 more join contest for Legco seats

SEVENTEEN more Legislative Council hopefuls have registered for the historic September poll as the nomination deadline draws near.

The number of nomination forms received yesterday was the highest recorded on a single day since the opening of nominations early this month. Potential candidates have until tomorrow to register.

Among the 17 nominations, 16 are vying for a place in the new-style Legco through the electoral college constituencies while the remaining one is seeking a seat through the commercial

functional group.

As of yesterday, there is an average of two contestants in each electoral division of the functional constituencies.

The competition among members of district boards and municipal services bodies, however, is keener with an average of 2.5 persons vying for each seat.

In the September 26 vote, 12 seats have been earmarked for nine functional groups which are supposed to represent the major economic and professional sectors of the local community.

Another 12 are allotted to the grassroots representatives at the district or regional level.

A last-minute rush of four nominations for The New

Territories East election has made the constituency the most keenly contested field in the upcoming polls.

The candidates submitting nomination forms yesterday were a lecturer at the Chinese University of Hongkong, Mr Andrew Wong, and three leaders of the Heungyeekuk, Mr Stephen Wong, Mr Wai Hon-leung and Mr Liu Ching-leung.

Mr Stephen Wong is currently chairman of the Taipo District Board while both Mr Wai and Mr Liu are members of the Provisional Regional Council.

Despite the large number of contenders, it is expected that it will probably be a tug-of-war between Mr Andrew Wong and Mr Pang Hang-yin, chairman of the North District Board who handed in his nomination last week.

In the New Territories West, Kuntong and Shumshuipoo constituencies, nominations got off to a slow start but seven aspirants have now made up their minds.

Dr Tang Siu-tong and solicitor Mr Tai Chin-wah are the latest additions to the New Territories West race.

In Kwuntong the three contestants are social worker Mr Li Wah-ming, businessman Mr Cheng Kwan-suen and executive Mr Poon Chi-fai.

The two throwing in their hats into the ring in Shamshuipoo — Mr Chung Pui-lam and Mr Cheung Wing-sum — are both lawyers.

The most unexpected contender among the 17 nominations is probably unionist Mr Ip Kwok-chung who is vying for the seat allotted to the Yaumati and Mongkok district boards which make up the South Kowloon constituency.

The remaining four district board members eyeing a place in the legislature are Dr Anthony Ng of Hongkong Island West, Dr Richard Lai of the New Territories South, Mr Chum Ting-pong and Urban Council member Mr Kwan Lim-ho of Hongkong Island East.

The lone nomination in the functional constituency was by the vice chairman of the Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce, Mr Thomas Clydesdale.