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Candidate-Dropped

ABANG ABU BAKAR DROPPED AS CANDIDATE FOR COMING POLLS

KUCHING, Oct 5 (Bernama) -- The Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) has excluded Defence Minister Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha from its list of candidates renominated to contest in the coming general election.

According to party sources, the PBB's supreme council meeting yesterday agreed that Abang Abu Bakar, the MP for Kuala Rajang, be dropped.

The meeting also decided not to renominate several others.

They include Bukit Mas MP Michael Lisa Kaya and James Jimbun Pungga, the MP for Kapit, as they have declined renomination, the sources said.

Chief Minister and PBB president Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud told reporters after the meeting yesterday that voters in Sarawak could expect a change in the party's candidate line-up for the election.

He said several names would be dropped and replaced with younger candidates.

"This is a normal process in the party. Their exclusion was to enhance the party's services to the people," he said.

The dropping of Abang Abu Bakar as a candidate was expected following his failure to retain the deputy president's post in the party election last year.

He was defeated by State Industrial Development Minister Datuk Abang Johari Tun Openg.

Only last week, the youth wing of PBB Matu-Daro division in the Kuala Rajang parliamentary constituency, passed a resolution urging the party leadership to drop Abang Abu Bakar as a candidate in the polls.

According to the youth chief Ahmad Dikoh, the resolution was adopted as Abang Abu Bakar did not serve his constituents effectively during his four term as MP for the constituency.

Abdul Taib said the party's candidate list was ready and was up to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to make the final decision.

The party sources told Bernama that several other candidates would also be excluded or had requested not to be renominated apart from the three which is an open secret among political observers in the state.

Speculations are rife that Agriculture Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud, who is also Petra Jaya MP and Rohani Karim, the Santubong MP, might not be renominated.

"The exclusion of Dr Sulaiman is on the basis that he is among the longest-serving elected representatives and his constituency is an urban seat which required a younger person," said a source.

Another party source said the phasing out of old guards would not affect PBB's and Sarawak Barisan Nasional's winning chances in the election.

"PBB is a stable party with not many issues and problems. Voters are expected to accept the chances," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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