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Taib-Candidate

DIRECT BN CANDIDATE MAY BE FIELDDED FOR MAMBONG, SAYS TAIB

KUCHING, Oct 26 (Bernama) -- Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud today hinted the possibility of fielding a direct Barisan Nasional (BN) candidate in the new parliamentary seat of Mambong for the next general election.

"I do not see a problem but let's see what (Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) has to say about it," he said when asked to comment on talk that such a candidate would be fielded as a compromise among the four BN component parties.

Abdul Taib, who is the state BN chairman, said he would discuss the matter with the prime minister and leave him to make the final decision.

A siminal formula was applied in the 1995 parliamentary election when a direct BN candidate, Billy Abit, was fielded in Hulu Rajang. Abit later joined Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) after winning the seat.

Abdul Taib said he would also leave the seat allocation to Dr Mahathir although he had "a fair idea of what to decide".

On seat-swapping among the BN component parties, he said that there was no necessity for this as all the parties were quite happy with the present arrangement.

Last night, after attending a two-hour Barisan Nasional supreme council meeting, Dr Mahathir, who is the BN chairman, said the BN components could swap constituencies with each other in the election.

Abdul Taib was confident that such an arrangement would produce positive results for the state BN, comprising the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PPB), Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), PBDS and Sarawak National Party (SNAP).

The BN won 26 out 28 parliamentary seats in the last parliamentary election in 1995.

-- BERNAMA

CJ JK