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Dr M to `decide Abang Abu Bakar's fate'

KOTA SAMARAHAN, Sun. - The State Barisan Nasional has left it to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to decide whether Defence Minister Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha should be re-nominated to contest in the coming general election.

State BN chairman and Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud made this clear in the face of speculation that Abang Abu Bakar, the incumbent Member of Parliament for Kuala Rajang, would be dropped from the line-up of candidates.

"I am not going to confirm or deny (the speculations), (but) normally I don't make a final decision," said Taib, who is also Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) president, when asked by reporters after officiating at the first convocation ceremony of the Samarahan Teachers' Training College yesterday.

He reiterated a statement he had made after PBB's Supreme Council meeting on Monday that it was normal to have changes from election to election.

Taib stressed: "Until I consult Dr Mahathir, I don't want to say anything."

Uncertainties over Abang Abu Bakar's candidacy was sparked by PBB members.

On Sept 24 this year, the PBB Matu-Daro Youth chief Ahmad Dikoh issued a statement in the Sarawak Tribune that since Abang Abu Bakar had failed to defend his post as deputy president of PBB, he would not be able to work together with the State leadership.

He also alleged Abang Abu Bakar among other things, had failed to implement major development programmes.

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