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Taib-Election

SARAWAK BN ALL SET TO FACE THE GENERAL ELECTION

KUCHING, May 5 (Bernama) -- The Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN) is "now working the ground" as part of its preparation to face the coming general election expected to be held before April next year.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud predicted that the state's BN coalition would retain power as the unity within the parties was strong and development programmes had benefited people from all walks of life over the past few years.

"The organisation is already there. The cooperation between the parties in BN is very good. All the candidates are getting along very well in their constituencies.

"The challenge doesn't seem very frightening. God willing, we can expect good results whenever it takes place," he was quoted in an exclusive interview with Fong Peng Khuan, the editor of Sarawak-based New Reality bi-monthly magazine, here, today.

Taib, who is the state BN chairman, said the BN was hopeful to win many seats to make sure that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would have good support in Sarawak.

"His government has good credibility among the people of Sarawak and all the parties of the BN. Our support has not suffered in any way by events in Peninsular Malaysia," he said.

Touching on various issues from the civil service, Information Technology (IT) and economic matters, Taib expressed confidence the timber industry would bounce back this year after experiencing hard times when the price of timber fell below cost.

"The recovery is better than anybody has expected a year ago," he said, adding that the timber industry in Sabah and Sarawak had bravely weathered a difficult economic period.

On the property sector, he said Sarawak was spared the worst scenario in the real estate business with Kuching being least affected while Miri suffered the effect of recession but not as bad as some West Malaysian towns.

He also said the setting up of the integrated waste management system in Kuching, the alumina refinery plant in Bintulu and the development of a forest plantation by Borneo Paper and Pulp would further accelerate the state's economic growth.

He said if successfully initiated, these new project would boost the economy growth rate to more than the 5 per cent expected.

-- BERNAMA

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