

Sarawak BN finalises list of candidates

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KUCHING: The Sarawak Barisan Nasional has finalised its list of candidates for the state elections, said its chairman Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

He said he would submit the names to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad soon.

Taib, who is also Chief Minister, did not say how many of the Barisan candidates would be new faces.

Component parties have said they would drop some incumbents.

The state Barisan comprises Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu, Sarawak United People's Party, Sarawak National Party and Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak.

Asked if Barisan was confident of winning all the 62 seats at stake, he said it would be up to the voters to decide.

"We have worked hard," he added after opening a Barisan seminar for the Bidayuh community at Semenggok near here yesterday.

In the 1996 polls, the coalition won 57 and lost three seats to DAP and two others to independents.

It captured 19 seats uncontested on nomination day and took back Kidurong seat from DAP in a by-election.

Taib said he did not have any surprises for the polls, unlike in 1987 when he called for snap polls after a group of elected representatives attempted to topple his leadership in the "Ming Court" affair.

Indicating earlier that the polls would be called either next month or in October, he said Barisan had given a fair chance to the opposition to campaign.