

31 JULY 2001

Taib-Election

MY SEAT WILL BE DECIDED END OF NEXT MONTH, SAYS TAIB

MUKAH, July 31 (Bernama) -- Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said today a Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) meeting slated for end of next month would decide the party's candidates for the upcoming state election, including whether he would defend his Asajaya seat or move to another.

He said Melanau-majority Balingian, Dalat, Matu-Daro, Serdeng and Belawai seats have been offered to him by the incumbents.

He said he would leave it to the party to decide where he should contest.

Asked if PBB should allow him as its president to select the seat of his choice, he said this would not happen as it was not its tradition.

"The president should not decide on his own and it should remain that way, otherwise he will be showing his favourite place when all other constituencies are just as valuable to the party," he told reporters after laying the foundation stone for the RM25 million Batang Mukah bridge here.

Asked whether he would contest in Balingian following a strong request from the assemblyman Abdul Ajis Majeed and the constituents, Taib said he was willing to go anywhere.

He, however, said the people in Balingian could write in or send a petition to the party leadership for a decision.

"I do not want to anticipate my constituency, otherwise it will influence them in their decision to give face to me," he said.

Taib said PBB had never decided on personal or racial grounds constituencies for its candidates but instead development was an important criteria.

On Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad's statement in Kota Kinabalu yesterday that Umno would not back any candidate against the Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN) in the coming state election, he said this was expected of him.

"The man (Dr Mahathir) is an honourable man and Umno, as the backbone and leader of the BN, is a very responsible party," he said.

Taib also said PBB had not accepted anyone who challenged the party in previous elections.

"We prefer to have no seat rather than allowing those who challenge us into the party unless under very special and different circumstances.

"So far, we have not done so," he added.

The five-year mandate of the 62-seat State Legislative Assembly ends on Nov 18.

-- BERNAMA

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