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Taib: Council to decide for me

Sulok Tawie

KUCHING, Wed. - Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu president Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said today the party's supreme council which meets next week will decide on the constituency he will be contesting in the coming State election.

"It is up to the supreme council to decide, and I will abide by whatever decision it makes," he told reporters after performing a ground-breaking ceremony for the proposed RM730,000 building belonging to Shiang Fatt T'ng Benevolent Society at Tabuan Laru, near here.

He said the names of the other 28 candidates from the party had been finalised.

Taib, who is also Chief Minister, said the constituents of Asajaya, of which he is the incumbent assemblyman since 1981, and Balingian had aggressively been campaigning for him to contest in their areas.

"Therefore, I am not able to tell where I will be contesting because the supreme council will decide on it when it holds its meeting on Tuesday," he said.

The term of the 62 members of the State Legislative Assembly elected in the Sept 7-8, 1996 election, expires on Nov 18 but speculation is rife that the election will be held next month.

Taib said he would not be chairing the meeting because he was an interested party.

He added that he wanted all the supreme council members to express their views freely without him attending the meeting.

He said he faced a similar situation when he was asked by people from different constituencies to contest in their areas in 1981.

Asked whether it would be a sad thing for him if he were to leave the Asajaya constituency, Taib said he would not be leaving the constituency completely because it was one of the two seats under his Kota Samarahan parliamentary constituency.

Barisan Nasional chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to endorse the list of BN candidates when he returns from his Middle East trip next week.