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Keen fight seen for PBB Youth vice-chairman

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KUCHING, Fri. - The Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu triennial delegates convention starts tomorrow with the joint opening of the Youth and Wanita movements' meeting by Chief Minister and PBB president Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud at a beach resort in Santubong, about 50km from here.

PBB Youth executive secretary James Tieng today said about 1,000 delegates and observers from the two wings were expected to attend.

Barisan Nasional chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will open the convention on Monday.

A keen fight is expected for the post of vice-chairman reserved for the Bidayuh community. Incumbent Martin Ben is being challenged by businessman Munded Banat. The Malay/Melanau slot is filled by Pantai Damai assemblyman Dr Abdul Rahman Junaidi. The post for Ibans has been retained by Mikai Mandau.

Both Dr Abdul Rahman and Mikai won uncontested when nominations in the wing closed on July 1.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Douglas Uggah will replace Assistant Minister of Land and Rural Development Datuk Gramong Juna as Youth head.

Asajaya assemblyman Abdul Karim Hamzah is to replace Assistant Minister in the Chief Minister's Office Datuk Awang Tengah Ali Hasan as the Youth deputy head.

Juna declined re-election to the post while Awang Tengah is over the age limit of 45 years. Traditionally, the post of Youth head is given to the Pesaka wing of the party and the deputy head to the Bumiputera wing.

(PBB is a result of a merger in 1973 between the Iban-based Parti Pesaka and the Malay/Melanau-based Parti Bumiputera).

A total of 13 candidates will vie for the eight seats in the Youth committee for the Bumiputera wing.

However, seven candidates vying for seats in the Pesaka wing won uncontested.

PBB Youth will hold its election tomorrow afternoon.

Meanwhile, resolutions on incest and the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English will be tabled at the Wanita PBB convention.

The movement's vice-head Rohani Karim said she expected a debate on incest as the movement had expressed its concern over an increase in the number of incest cases lately.

Rohani, Parliamentary Secretary for National Unity and Community Development, said delegates would support the Education Ministry's move to use English in teaching Science and Mathematics next year.

There is no contest for posts in the Wanita PBB. All incumbents were returned unopposed when nominations closed on July 1.