

Taib: If I'm not needed, I'll go
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Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud has yet to decide whether to defend his state seat in the coming 10th state election.

The 74-year-old Taib, who is the state's longest-serving chief minister for 29 years since March 26, 1981, said he could not decide for himself on this as it needed to be discussed and approved by others.

"I don't know... it is up to the party and the prime minister," he told reporters after presenting Amanah Raya Berhad (ARB) scholarships to three Sarawak students pursuing their studies at Al-Azhar University today.

The students are Mohammad Zubair Mustafa who was studying at Sekolah Menengah Agama Persekutuan in Labu, Negeri Sembilan, Faliq Asraf Jafri from SMK Agama Tunaz in Kuching and Nadira Hamapei from SMK Agama Miri.

Taib, who was previously Asajaya assemblyperson before moving to the Balingian state seat in 2001, said he was ready to quit if the situation required him to do so.

"A lot of people say I'm not needed. If I'm not needed, I will go out," he said.

Puzzled over Chinese sentiments

Taib who is PBB president since 1981 and Sarawak BN chairperson, said he had wanted to quit politics in 2006 but many within the party were against it and finally he decided not to retire.

As to when he would likely call for the state election, he said the matter had not been decided yet.

On Chinese voters' sentiments in Sarawak that still preferred the opposition rather than BN, he said the trend puzzled him until today.

"I've also asked the same question, I want to know," he said, adding that the state government had sincerely tried to win the hearts of Chinese voters but it still failed to do so until today.

In the 2006 state election, PBB won 34 of the 71 state seats, followed by SUPP with 11, Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) nine and Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP) eight, while the rest were won by opposition parties.

- Bernama

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