

BN Getting Women Into Sarawak Politics
Bernama
12 April, 2013

KUCHING, April 12 (Bernama) -- In the 2008 general election, the Barisan Nasional (BN) fielded three women candidates, and the women -- Datuk Rohani Abdul Karim with newcomers, Nancy Shukri and Datuk Norah Abdul Rahman -- delivered on the dot.

Fielded by Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), the backbone of the state BN, the trio is also the only women members of parliament from Sarawak.

The PBB is set to add a fourth woman candidate for the upcoming 13th poll for the Kota Samarahan seat which was won by Datuk Seri Sulaiman Abdul Rahman Taib, the youngest son of PBB president Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

Taib announced earlier this week that the PBB would maintain its stake of contesting 14 seats and would field one more woman candidate and retain the remaining incumbents.

As Sarawak has already held its state election, the 31 parliamentary constituencies at stake will see PBB contesting in 14 seats, SUPP (seven), PRS (six) and SPDP (four).

In 2008, Sarawak BN won 30 of the 31 seats. The opposition did not field any woman candidate.

Talk is rife that Kota Samarahan may be entrusted to Asajaya district officer Rubiah Wang to contest.

Rubiah is considered to have the "winnable" element as she is local born and her service record is seen as an advantage because she is familiar with the problems and needs of the people there.

Another name mentioned is Taib's youngest daughter Datin Hanifah Taib-Alsree who is involved in charity work on the ground in her capacity as the Muslim Welfare Organisation Malaysia (Perkim) state chairman.

Rohani, who is the most experienced woman politician in the state, won her fifth term as a parliamentarian by defending the Batang Lupar seat in 2008.

It is still a guess if Rohani, who was appointed federal Domestic Trade, Cooperative and Consumerism Deputy Minister, will continue to run there or return to Santubong where she has won three times before.

Nancy Shukri made her winning debut in Batang Sadong while Datuk Norah Abdul Rahman, daughter of former Sarawak chief minister and Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Yakub, had won uncontested in Tanjung Manis.

BN state component party, Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP), is said to be mulling the idea of a woman candidate too.

Local politicians are talking of Barbara Mawan, the daughter of SPDP president Tan Sri William Mawan, standing in Saratok but there are views that her father may take on the seat himself against Ali Biju of PKR.

In the 2011 state election, Ali had defeated SPDP deputy president Datuk Peter Nyarok in Krian.

Mawan had said he was ready to contest Saratok if that's decided by the BN top leadership.

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