

# 135 candidates to contest polls

By MY Sung

A TOTAL of 135 candidates will contest the municipal council elections on 5 March.

Nominations closed yesterday after the final 18 were registered and three candidates withdrew.

Candidates affiliated to political parties accounted for 61 per cent of the total, while independents made up 39 per cent.

The Democratic Party is fielding the largest number at 36, including five legislative councillors.

The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) will be a tough rival for the Democratic Party. The DAB has 17 candidates, but its secretary-general Cheng Kai-nam failed to register.

The Association for Democracy and People's



**ELSIE TU:** Only independent legislative councillor to run.



**SZETO WAH:** Among six legislators in elections.

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Livelihood is fielding nine candidates. There are 53 independents.

Among the candidates, there are 78 members of district boards, 21 incumbents of the two municipal councils and six legislative

councillors. Five of the six legislators are Szeto Wah, Lee Wing-tat, Tik Chi-yuen, Fung Chi-wood and Fred Li; all from the Democratic Party.

Elsie Tu is the only independent legislator to run for

the municipal council. Mrs Tu and Mr Li are also Urban Council incumbents.

Seven candidates were returned unopposed.

Men continue to dominate, with 114 men or 84 per cent, against 21 women or 16 per cent.

The March elections will be the first fully direct elections for the two municipal councils under Governor Chris Patten's political reform package adopted last year.

There are a total of 41 seats for the Urban Council with 32 directly-elected seats and nine district board representatives.

The Regional Council will be composed of 39 seats with 27 directly-elected. It will also have nine district board representatives and three ex-officio seats from the Heung Yee Kuk.