

19 MAY 1996

Anwar-Yong

ANWAR CONTACTS PM ON YONG'S APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF MINISTER

KUALA LUMPUR, May 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today he contacted Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Tokyo yesterday to inform him that the appointment of Datuk Yong Teck Lee as the new Sabah Chief Minister cannot be implemented yet because several matters need to be discussed.

"I informed the prime minister before he left for the United States that several matters need to be discussed," he told reporters after attending the Maal Hijrah celebrations at Stadium Negara, here.

Anwar, who is the Deputy Prime Minister, said he would call Yong next week to discuss the matters.

Dr Mahathir, when commenting on the RM1,000 fine imposed on Yong by the Kota Kinabalu Magistrate's Court last Wednesday for participating in an illegal assembly, said that with the sentence, Yong would not lose his eligibility as a Sabah state assemblyman and could be appointed chief minister.

He said he had left instructions with Anwar to proceed with Yong's appointment if there were no legal obstructions.

Yong and four others were fined RM1,000 each after they pleaded guilty to an amended charge of participating in an illegal assembly during the 1990 general election. Under the Federal and Sabah constitutions, an elected representative is only disqualified from holding the post if he is fined RM2,000 or more.

Anwar said last Thursday that Yong's appointment as chief minister could not be implemented now due to several unresolved matters and he would contact the prime minister and meet Yong to discuss them.

Dr Mahathir left for San Francisco for a three-day visit after ending his six-day visit to Japan yesterday. He is expected to arrive home on Friday after stopping over in London for a three-day visit.

Yong, the president of the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP), will replace Datuk Mohamed Salleh Keruak as Sabah Chief Minister under the rotation system promised by the Barisan Nasional before the 1994 state election. --

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MAM PR JK