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PM DID NOT INDICATE DATE FOR SWEARING IN, SAYS YONG

KOTA KINABALU, May 7 (Bernama) -- Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) President Datuk Yong Teck Lee said tonight that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad did not indicate to him any date when the new chief minister would be sworn-in.

He said that during his meeting with Dr Mahathir in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, they discussed in general the overall situation in Sabah, including his position as the likely new chief minister.

When pressed further whether the prime minister had indicated when he would be sworn-in, Yong, who is also the state's Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister, said no date was fixed.

"Anything specific in relation to the date would have to come from official sources, I cannot comment further on that," he told reporters just before attending his party's supreme council meeting here.

When asked if he had tendered his cabinet line-up to the prime minister, Yong said they only discussed the principles that should be used to decide on the state's cabinet composition.

He declined to reveal those principles, saying it was too early.

Yong is tipped to become the next Chief Minister of Sabah replacing Datuk Salleh Said Keruak following Dr Mahathir's election pledge in 1994 to rotate the post among the leaders of the three major communities in Sabah -- Muslim bumiputeras, Chinese, and non-Muslim bumiputeras.

Asked on the implications of his court case, Yong said the court case should not be discussed as it would be subjudice.

"However, I had a lengthy discussion with my lawyers on the court case today," he said, declining to elaborate.

Yong is jointly charged with four others with taking part in an illegal procession here during the 1990 general election. The trial has started in the Magistrate's Court here and will continue on May 21.

If convicted, Yong faces a minimum fine of RM2,000 and up to one year's imprisonment. -- BERNAMA

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