

15 MAY 1996

Mahathir - Yong

YONG TECK LEE CAN NOW BE CHIEF MINISTER

By: Tham Choy Lin

TOKYO, May 15 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the appointment of Datuk Yong Teck Lee as Sabah Chief Minister can now take place as he has not been disqualified as an elected representative.

The Prime Minister said he had left instructions with Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to proceed with the appointment if Yong clears all legal obstacles.

Yong and four others were today fined RM1,000 by the Magistrate's court in Kota Kinabalu on an amended charge of taking part in an unlawful assembly during the 1990 election. Under the Federal and state Constitutions, Yong could be disqualified from being a member of the state assembly if he was fined RM2,000 or more.

Dr Mahathir, who was informed of the court's verdict here, said: "Well that means that he won't be barred from taking office as he will continue to be a member of the (state) assembly. I have already left instructions with Datuk Seri Anwar. So he will proceed (with the appointment)."

Asked when Yong will be sworn in, he said: "I will have to contact Datuk Seri Anwar."

Yong, president of the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP), has been named to take over from Datuk Salleh Said Keruak of Umno as Chief Minister under the rotation system promised by the Prime Minister.

Asked about the appointment of the new Menteri Besar of Kedah, he said: "At the moment I do not know yet. I have been away and cut off from news."

Tan Sri Osman Aroff has tendered his resignation but his successor has yet to be named.

Dr Mahathir left Kuala Lumpur on Sunday night and will be away until May 24.

Meanwhile in Kuala Lumpur, Anwar when approached by reporters declined to say when the appointment of Yong will take place. -- BERNAMA

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