

Barisan Nasional fielding Yong to defend Likas seat

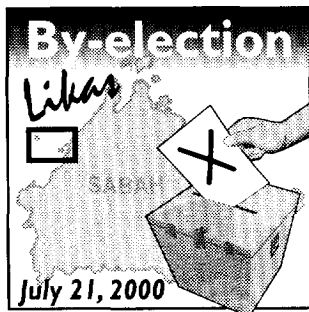
KOTA KINABALU: Barisan Nasional has chosen 43-year old Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) president Datuk Yong Teck Lee to defend the Likas seat for the July 21 by-election.

Ending weeks of speculations whether the coalition will renominate the former Sabah chief minister, Sabah Barisan chairman Chong Kah Kiat announced yesterday that Yong would be fielded.

"I have the approval of Barisan chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for Yong to be our candidate," he said before handing over the letter authorising Yong as the Barisan's candidate.

Chong said Yong, who had served the Likas constituency since 1985, was the most suitable and experienced candidate.

He said all state Barisan



parties unanimously support Yong as the candidate and have assured "to go all out to ensure Yong is vindicated."

Doubts were cast on his eligibility to contest after election judge Datuk Muhammad Kamil Awang found Yong and his agents to have committed an offence under the Election Offences Act by a petition brought by former Bersekutu president Datuk Harris Salleh.

However, Yong obtained a

stay order from the High Court here to appeal against the decision of Muhammad Kamil who, in his June 8 judgment, also nullified the 1999 Likas election after allowing another petition by Dr Chong Eng Leong of Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) who claimed that the Likas electoral rolls were tainted with phantom voters.

Likas has a total of 26,196 voters with about 16,000 Muslim bumiputras, 8,000 Chinese and some 2,500 Kadazandusun living in this semi-urban constituency that forms part of Kota Kinabalu City.

Yong is expected to face Dr Chong again although PBS, till late yesterday evening, remained tight-lipped on their choice.

Parti Keadilan Nasional is reportedly planning to field a candidate but was in negotiation with PBS.