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Likas-SAPP

SAPP WELCOMES BN SEC-GEN'S STATEMENT ON LIKAS

KOTA KINABALU, July 8 (Bernama) -- The Sabah Progressive Parti (SAPP) today welcomed the confirmation by Barisan Nasional (BN) secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat yesterday that the coalition's candidate for the Likas by-election will come from the SAPP.

Its secretary-general, Richard Yong, said the party had given the assurance that it was ready for the by-election to be held following the recent Election Court's declaration that the result for Likas in the 1999 state election was null and void due to irregularities and the existence of phantom voters.

Nomination day for the by-election has been set for July 12 and in the event there is a contest, polling will be on July 21.

Asked on the choice of candidate, Richard Yong said it would be announced later.

Asked whether SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee would be renominated, Richard Yong said Yong Teck Lee was still the the first choice.

"We have more than enough people who are qualified but the first choice will still be Datuk Yong," he said when contacted.

Yong Teck Lee was granted a stay of execution of last month's judgment of the Election Court which held that he committed offences under Section 11 (c) and (d) and Section 32 of the Election Offences Act 1954.

His lawyer said the stay of execution would make him eligible to be renominated in the by-election.

"We just have to wait," Richard Yong said.

BN is expected to announce its candidate tomorrow or at the latest a day before the nomination day on Thursday at Dewan Maksak in Likas.

As of yesterday, three parties -- SAPP, Keadilan and an individual not representing any political party -- have taken nomination papers to fulfil part of the procedure for the nomination of candidates.

Meanwhile, when asked on the issue, Sabah Umno liaison chairman Datuk Osu Sukam said the decision on BN's candidate for Likas is to be made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is BN chairman.

"When he has made a decision, we will abide by it. We will not question as to whether or not it favours any component party...that is another question but the important thing is that we have activated our machinery to ensure a BN victory," he said.

Umno has made known its intention to field its candidate should BN decides to field a candidate other than Yong. Besides Umno, MCA has also indicated its interest to field its candidate.

Asked why Umno was interested in the seat, Osu said: "It is because we have a division there and also because most of the voters are from the Malay community...so it is only natural (that we have such interest)," he said.

On Umno's preparation for the BN campaign in Likas, Osu said: "We went through several elections and as usual Umno's machiney has been activated and we are confident the BN will succeed."

-- BERNAMA

JS RM