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Umno, SAPP and PBS eyeing Gaya seat

KOTA KINABALU, Wed. - Sabah Progressive Party, Umno and Parti Bersatu Sabah have submitted their request to represent the Barisan Nasional in the Gaya parliamentary by-election.

Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said today their request has been forwarded to Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his consideration.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday said the BN's candidate for the Gaya by-election will be announced after Dr Mahathir has been consulted.

Chong, who is State BN chairman, said he did not expect any controversy to arise once a decision was made on the BN candidate.

"As in past by-elections, all BN component members will support whoever is chosen as the candidate," he said at a post-Cabinet Press conference at his office.

Citing the Likas State by-election in July last year as an example, he said all the BN component parties went all out to support and campaign for the BN candidate Datuk Yong Teck Lee.

The Gaya by-election is being called after Yong was disqualified as Gaya MP following the Federal Court's decision to reject his application for leave to appeal against a Court of Appeal's ruling upholding the Election Court's finding that he had committed corrupt practices in the 1999 State election.

The Election Commission has fixed nomination for the by-election for Oct 3 and polling on Oct 12.

In the 1999 general election, Yong obtained 15,315 votes to defeat Johnny Goh of PBS, who polled 11,198 votes.

Chong was optimistic that the by-election will see the BN garnering a much bigger majority than in the 1999 election.

"I believe the people in Gaya who have benefited so much from the Government will rally behind the BN," he said.