

SAPP: Hold State, federal, polls together

Star 8/9/03

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KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) is in favour of holding the state and parliamentary elections together but this would depend on when Kuala Lumpur decides to dissolve Parliament.

SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee said it would be in everyone's interest if concurrent elections were held to save on cost, reduce distractions to government plans and programmes and lessen politicking among parties.

"At the same time, the people and business community can get on with their lives without the burden of excessive speculation and election carnivals," Yong said at the 10th SAPP Congress, opened by

Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman.

He said with Sabah elections due by next April and parliamentary elections expected by next October, the idea of holding concurrent elections should be given serious thought.

He said the general mood among local Barisan leaders was that they favoured concurrent elections.

"Our dates (state and parliament dissolution) are close enough to each other for us to consider this possibility," he said, adding that it would also depend on how Sabah presented its views on the matter to federal leaders.

Yong's address at the assembly touched on the proposal to replace the two-year chief minister rotation system with

a new power sharing formula.

"I have proposed a Sarawak formula (in which all component parties play a meaningful role in government) as the basis of discussion for an alternative to the rotation system," said Yong.

He also called for gaming to be checked and education programmes to be strengthened.

Yong paid tribute to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his "depth of foresight" and leadership that had resulted in countries around the world looking up to Malaysia as a model that should be emulated.

He said SAPP has every confidence in Dr Mahathir's deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, when he takes over the leadership.