

Yong's star still shining bright
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Like a rock star charging on to the stage, SAPP president Yong Teck Lee did not disappoint.

Emerging from the Sandakan Community Hall as his party's candidate for the Batu Sapi by-election, the former chief minister made his way around the nomination centre's grounds, smiling and waving to everyone in his field of vision.

And interestingly enough, everyone seemed to oblige and cheer him on, regardless of which flag they were carrying.

The charismatic leader however saved the best for his supporters, who hoisted him on to a barricade so he could address the 100-strong SAPP flag-waving group.

After leading his supporters in a bout of flag waving and cheers, Yong held his hands out to his sides, calling for silence as he prepared to speak.

"Today, is the start of freedom for Sabah," he declared, eliciting a roar of approval from his supporters, who had for the most part of the morning stood in tight formation as they each held up a party flag, not unlike a battalion ready for war.

Earlier when met by reporters, Yong expressed his confidence going into the nine days of campaigning and the eventual polls on Nov 4.

"*Ada!* (have)," he exclaimed when asked if he has a shot at winning this contest, which came about after the motorcycling death of Batu Sapi MP Edmund Chong Ket Wah about two weeks ago.

Yong (*left*), who is contesting an election for the first time since he was suspended for an election offence when he won the Gaya parliamentary constituency in 1999, said he will continue to raise issues that he and his party have raised over the past two years since leaving the BN and going independent.

Vow to bring change

"I will focus on issues we have raised before, including unemployment, poverty, land, rising cost of goods, squatters, the many empty promises and lies (by the BN)... we will bring change," he said.

The party, however, has yet to give any clear plans over their campaign schedule, which seems to be organised separately by SAPP's top leaders.

Party deputy president and Sepanggar MP Eric Majimbun noted that they are not too interested in hosting big ceramah or rallies, but instead take the more grassroots approach by going house to house.

"Of course we will have some events, but it will be better to go straight to the grassroots. We will be making a lot of house calls," he said when met at the nomination centre.

Campaigning starts from today until midnight of polling day on Nov 4.

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