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MCA's candidate may be known by end of the week, says Ling

KANGAR, Sat. - The MCA's candidate for the upcoming Indera Kayangan State Assembly by-election could be determined next Saturday, with the possibility of polling to be held on Jan 19.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today he would be arriving in Kangar on Friday with a delegation of national MCA leaders and that the selection of the candidate could possibly be finalised the following day.

Dr Ling said this in his speech during his visit to the party's main by-election campaign operations room, located at the MCA Kangar division office, here.

Meanwhile Barisan Nasional's Indera Kayangan by-election deputy director Datuk Radzi Sheikh Ahmad, who was also present, said in his speech that he anticipated polling to be conducted on Jan 19.

He said this was the most suitable date when considering various factors, such as the fact that it fell on the third Saturday of the month which is a holiday for civil servants.

The Election Commission is scheduled to meet on Wednesday to determine the date for the by-election.

Dr Ling earlier met State BN chairman and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim at his office.

In a Press conference held before the meeting with Shahidan, the MCA president said he had received the names of four potential candidates and had submitted the names to BN president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Mahathir would make the final decision on the candidate, Dr Ling added.

He expressed the hope that the candidate would receive support from the other three shortlisted aspirants and their supporters. "For example, how can I expect you to support me if I won't support you if you are picked?"

"So the principle applies to all; whoever is picked, all the rest must support," he said, adding that Perlis MCA had agreed to support the chosen candidate, whoever it may be.

The four aspirants are said to be Perlis Wanita MCA chairman and Arau division chief Oui Ah Lan, Kangar division deputy chief Steven Lee, State MCA secretary Tan Kok Kheng, and Kangar division committee member Chn'g Ban San.

Dr Ling said his day trip to Kangar today was to meet with Shahidan, survey the Indera Kayangan constituency and inspect the MCA's preparations.

Asked when the candidate would be announced, Dr Ling said he would await Dr Mahathir's decision before deciding when to announce the name.

Asked when he expected Dr Mahathir to decide on the candidate, Dr Ling replied: "When I find out, I will call you."

On his agreement to lead the MCA's campaign machinery following a suggestion by party Youth chief Datuk Ong Tee Keat, who is among the leaders of Team B, Dr Ling expressed his confidence that the party would be able to close ranks for the by-election despite differences between the rival factions.

On whether he would invite Team B leaders such as deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek and vice-president Datuk Chua Jui Meng to participate in the MCA's by-election campaign, Dr Ling said he would.

"Nobody will be left out.

"Everybody is invited and everybody will be encouraged to play their rightful role."

Asked whether all MCA leaders from Team A and Team B would be present on nomination day, Dr Ling said he hoped everyone would be present.

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