

Two professionals among likely candidates

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KUALA LUMPUR: Two professionals are among four short-listed by Gerakan as potential candidates for the Ketari by-election, but the decision on who will be chosen to carry Barisan Nasional's challenge will only be made known by Wednesday.

The four are Ketari Gerakan branch chairman Yum Ah Ha, 51, a lawyer; Perting branch deputy chairman Dr Ng Keong Chai, 42, a dentist, Bandar Karak branch chairman Leong Yen Keong, 60, a commissioner of oaths and Sungai Dua branch

chairman Leong Ah Kuan, 46, a logging operator.

In announcing this, party president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said the four had assured him that they would support whomever the central working committee chose.

"The spirit of members in the Bentong division is very high. We will take everyone's opinion into account including the local associations. It will be very difficult to decide," he told reporters yesterday after the central committee meeting in Menara PGRM.

Dr Lim will be meeting with Pahang Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob on Monday and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Tuesday on the candidate.

He also said he was confident that Barisan would win, although it would be a "hard fight."

"We will put up a good challenge and retain the seat. We will co-operate (with other Barisan component parties). And we will not take things for granted as in 1999, it was only a 231-vote majority," he added.

Dr Lim also said the party's by-election task force would be activated fully within the next three days.

"There will be five operation centres for Gerakan, which are Genting Highlands, Bukit Tinggi, Perting, Ketari and Sungai Dua. And these centres will work closely with those set up by MCA, MIC and Umno," he added.

"We will co-ordinate and arrange house-to-house campaigning, *ceramah* and information to counter the opposition's claims," he added.