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BN candidate to be named on Wednesday

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The Gerakan candidate for the coming Ketari by-election is expected to be announced on Wednesday, party president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today.

He said Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob, who will lead the Barisan Nasional election team for the by-election, will announce the name of the candidate.

"The Gerakan central working committee is expected to meet sometime tomorrow, after which I will meet Adnan on Monday and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Tuesday," he said after chairing the party's central committee meeting.

To date, he said he had received four names submitted by the Bentong Gerakan division: Ketari Gerakan branch chairman Yum Ah Ha, 51, a lawyer; Perting branch deputy chairman Dr Ng Kong Chai, 42, a dentist; Bandar Karak branch chairman Leong Yen Kong, 60, a Commissioner of Oaths; and Sungai Dua branch chairman Leong Ah Khuan, 46, a logging operator.

It is learnt that among the four, Yum is the favourite considering that he is of the Kwangsi clan which makes up more than 70 per cent of the 9,388 Chinese voters. He is also a familiar figure as he had been frequently assisting former Assemblyman, the late Datuk Loke Koon Kam, 59, in the constituency.

There are a total 17,357 voters in Ketari based on the 2001 electoral roll, from which 54.1 per cent are Chinese; 6,969 Malays (40.2 per cent) and 1,000 Indians (5.8 per cent).

On the party's preparations to defend the State seat, Dr Lim said they had set up an election task force headed by him and also a committee at every voting district in Ketari.

"These committees will work closely with the Pahang and Bentong Gerakan divisions to co-ordinate and monitor all campaigning for the seat," he said, adding that five operation rooms had been also been set up.

"All preparations are progressing well and we are prepared for either a straight or three-cornered fight," he said.

Gerakan has also prepared a Ketari by-election guidebook which contains all necessary information for voters on the State seat.

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