

11 MAR 2002

Keng Yaik-Candidate

POTENTIAL CANDIDATE FOR KETARI POLLS KNOCKED DOWN TO TWO

KUALA LUMPUR, March 11 (Bernama) -- The Gerakan Central Working Committee (CWC) has narrowed down to two from the four candidates proposed earlier for the upcoming Ketari state by-election in Pahang, party president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today.

He, however, declined to name them but said one is a lawyer and the other, a doctor.

Among the names speculated earlier are the party's Ketari branch chairman Yum Ah Ha, 51, and Perting branch deputy chairman Dr Ng Keong Chye, 46.

"However, the candidate is still subjected to the endorsement by Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad," he said.

Dr Lim, who is Primary Industries Minister, was met by reporters at a dinner hosted by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for visiting Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at a leading hotel here tonight.

Dr Lim said he would meet Dr Mahathir tomorrow to finalise the candidate.

Asked on the possibility of a straight fight between the BN and DAP in the by-election, he said it did not matter.

The Election Commission has yet to fix the date for the by-election following the death of incumbent BN assemblyman Datuk Loke Koon Kam on March 3.

He admitted that Ketari was a "hot" seat as in the last general election the BN won only with a slim 231-vote majority.

He said the BN component parties had to work hard to defend the seat.

Dr Lim said the party was satisfied with the preparations made by BN components whose election machinery was ready to be activated.

"As such, I'm confident we can win but we have to work hard. Straight fight is easier or tougher is not the question. What's important is for the BN to be prepared with strategies to counter issues raised by the DAP," he said.

Meanwhile, Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob, when met at the dinner, said the BN candidate would be announced at the Umno building in Bentong at 5.30pm tomorrow after Dr Lim had received Dr Mahathir's endorsement.

-- BERNAMA

MAD AZH TS