

DAP wants to contest in by-election
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DAP today announced that it will contest in the April 12 by-election for the Machap state seat in Malacca.

Party secretary-general Lim Guan Eng told a press conference in Parliament that the decision was reached after the party central executive committee meeting last night.

He explained that DAP will contest the seat because it had contested there in the previous elections.

"Reaffirming what I said during the Batu Talam by-election (in Pahang), that in a seat previously contested by DAP, we will not boycott.

"In Batu Talam as you all know, PKR (Parti Keadilan Rakyat) and PAS boycotted and we accepted their decision. But if it was a seat contested by us, we will definitely contest," he said.

Lim said he had informed PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail of the decision and hopes that her party will cooperate.

"We had a conversation last night and I don't want to reveal the details of the conversation. So we conveyed our decision and that we can put in a good performance.

"I think the two of us are of one mind, that the most important thing is to increase the chances of the opposition candidate to win the by-election," he said.

Short-listed candidates?

The Machap state seat - a traditional stronghold of the ruling MCA - fell vacant following the death of incumbent Poh Ah Tiam, 55, last Thursday.

Since then, the possibility of a three-cornered fight was raised when PKR information bureau chief Tian Chua said that it is likely that the party will contest.

The leaders from both opposition parties have been embroiled in a war of words in the Chinese media over this issue for the past few days.

Yesterday, Wan Azizah said the party's political bureau will meet today to decide on whether to contest or not.

Meanwhile, asked if DAP has short-listed any candidates, Lim replied: "We have some recommendations but the short-listed candidates will be decided by a three-member committee made up of the chairperson, deputy chairperson and myself.

"We will announce when the government (Barisan Nasional) announces their (candidate)," he said with a smile.

The opposition leader's smile broadened when a reporter asked if he would contest for the seat since he had stood in Kota Melaka previously.

"I won't be contesting, I've made that clear. That is without a doubt. Everybody knows that," he replied.

Keadilan's keen as well

Meanwhile, PKR has also indicated that it was keen and ready to contest in the Machap by-election.

"We are interested in the seat and we are looking forward for an opposition victory," said Wan Azizah in a statement today.

"In spirit of unity, we will continue to consult with our opposition partners," she added.

The party's political bureau will be holding their meeting tonight to discuss the by-election.

Wan Azizah said that she was confident the opposition parties would be able to settle the issue amicably, "so that the best candidate is put forward in order to put up a good fight against BN".

"This is a golden opportunity for us to strengthen our cooperation, test our machinery and create the momentum for the upcoming general elections," she said.

She also said that PKR was committed in ensuring an opposition victory, whoever the candidate may be.

This morning, the Election Commission fixed April 3 for nomination and April 12 for the by-election.

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