

Machap by-election on April 12
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The Election Commission has announced that the Machap by-election would be held on April 12 while nominations would be on April 3.

The seat fell vacant following the death of Poh Ah Tiam, 55, last Thursday. He was also the state executive councillor and Malacca MCA chief.

The MCA has already short-listed seven candidates which would be finalised this Friday, with the frontrunner looking to be Lai Meng Chong, who is Human Resources Minister Dr Fong Chan Onn's political aide.

Three-cornered fight?

Opposition parties DAP and Parti Keadilan Rakyat are both eyeing the seat.

Poh won the Machap seat in 2004 with a thumping 5,847 votes against DAP's Liou Cheng Kuang who polled 1,285 votes.

EC chairperson Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman told reporters in Putrajaya today that the 2002 electoral roll, updated up to March 15, would be applied.

He revealed that there were 9,623 voters including 108 postal voters.

Chinese make up a 45 percent majority at the constituency, with 38 percent Malays and 15 percent Indians. The remaining two percent are other races.

Abdul Rashid, who also named Alor Gajah district officer Hasim Ismail as the returning officer, anticipated a 75 percent voter turnout

He also added that RM100,000 has been budgeted for the by-election.

Abdul Rashid explained that the by-election must be held because the vacancy occurred before the Malacca Legislative Assembly, which began on April 17, 2004, has yet to reach a three year term.

"If a vacancy occurs after April 16, 2007, a by-election need not be held unless the assembly speaker requests for it to be held on grounds like to determine the number of majority members of the assembly," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

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