

BN names local boy Lai for by-election
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Barisan Nasional (BN) today named Lai Meng Chong as its candidate for the Machap by-election in Malacca which will be held on April 12.

Lai, the political secretary to Human Resources Minister and MCA vice-president Dr Fong Chan Onn, will face DAP's Liou Chen Kuang in the polls. Tomorrow is nomination day.

Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced the BN candidate at the Machap Baru Chinese primary school in the presence of Fong, Malacca Chief Minister Mohd Ali Rustam, MCA President Ong Ka Ting, his deputy Chan Kong Choy and Umno vice president Muhyiddin Yassin.

The Machap seat fell vacant following the death of BN assemblyperson Poh Ah Tiam, 55, on March 15.

DAP candidate Liou, a 33-year-old businessman, lost to Poh in the Chinese-majority seat in the 2004 general election. The popular Poh retained the seat with a 4,562-vote majority.

BN's Lai, 56, is a local, born in Machap Baru.

The Machap state constituency has 9,623 registered voters including 108 postal voters. The Chinese account for 45 percent of the voters, Malays 38 percent, Indians 15 percent and others two percent.

Humble candidate

According to Bernama, which quoted Najib, Lai was chosen as residents found him amiable and approachable, besides being a local-born and active in the area.

"This person (Lai) is friendly and known to the residents as he has served the area a lot," said Najib who is also the deputy BN chairperson.

"Moreover, he has proven his capabilities, and is humble and simple in his approaches and yet they have been effective in his serving the people."

Najib also told reporters that he was confident of a BN win at Machap based on the spirit shown by the voters who gave Lai a thundering applause when his name was announced in the school hall.

"I am confident that based on his good track record, the candidate we've chosen would be able to fulfil the aspirations of the voters here," he said.

Bernama also quoted Lai as saying that his service record in his hometown gave him the advantage over his opponent.

"I know the people here and they have accepted me all these while," added Lai, who is also the MCA Alor Gajah division vice-chairman.

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