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BN drops 2 ministers, 4 deputies from polls line-up

Lokman Mansor

BARISAN Nasional (BN) has omitted two Cabinet ministers and four deputies from its line-up of candidates for the 10th general elections, and named another minister and three deputies to vie for state seats. A menteri besar and a chief minister will contest parliamentary seats. The move paves the way for new faces in the polls due on November 29. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who will defend his Kubang Pasu parliamentary seat, had said 30 per cent of the candidates will be new.

Those not in the list are Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek, his deputy Datuk Dr Affifuddin Omar, Defence Minister Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Wong See Wah, Deputy Rural Development Minister Datuk K. Kumaran, and Deputy Land and Cooperative Minister Datuk Dr Goh Cheng Teik.

Cabinet members who will now contest for state seats are Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali, Deputy Minister Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman, Deputy Health Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam, and Deputy Entrepreneur Minister Datuk Idris Jusoh.

Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin and Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib are vacating their state seats to join the parliamentary fray.

Several former Cabinet members are meanwhile making a comeback at the federal level. They include Tun Ghafar Baba, Datuk Rais Yatim, Datuk Napsiah Omar and Datuk Dr Yusof Nor, while former Perlis Menteri Besar Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh has been named as BN's candidate for the Kangar parliamentary seat.

Several veteran politicians have also been dropped, including BN secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, former Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Sabbaruddin Chik, former Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib and former Malacca Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik.

The Barisan Alternatif, also announced most of its candidates yesterday. PRM president Syed Husin Ali said the opposition front has decided to face BN candidates one-to-one in the elections.

Pas central working committee member Subky Latif will challenge Dr Mahathir in Kubang Pasu.

Parti Keadilan Nasional president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail will stand in the Permatang Pauh parliamentary constituency, a seat held by her husband Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for the past 16 years.

She will face Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Dr Ibrahim Saad.

At a press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Wan Azizah said Anwar will also be nominated to contest in the elections, but declined to identify the constituency.

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