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Cabinet to be known today (HL)

Sarban Singh

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who led the Barisan Nasional to a two-thirds majority in the recent general election, will name his Cabinet line-up tomorrow.

The Prime Minister will make the announcement, which comes 11 days after the conclusion of the Nov 29 polls, after an audience with Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah at Istana Negara in the morning.

According to a Press statement released by the Prime Minister's office today, Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, is scheduled to hold a Press conference at his office in Putrajaya at 4pm.

The presentation of appointment letters and swearing-in of the new members of the Cabinet has been fixed for Tuesday.

Umno, which forms the backbone of the BN, is expected to be given 16 Minister posts followed by the MCA (four), PBB (three), Gerakan, MIC, SUPP, PBDS and Upko (one each).

In the general election, the BN won 148 parliamentary seats while the Opposition secured the remaining 45.

There is a possibility that ministries would be merged and new ones created. Also expected are the swapping of Cabinet portfolios among several incumbents.

The Prime Minister began meeting BN component party and State leaders last Monday. Party leaders also submitted their nominations to Dr Mahathir to enable him to make the final decision.

Several deputy ministers, former State leaders and former ministers are said to be in the running for the seven vacant Cabinet positions.

They include Kelantan Umno liaison chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Gua Musang MP), Tan Sri Bernard Dompok (Kinabalu MP), Datuk Salleh Tun Said (Kota Belud MP), former Perlis Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Pawanteh (Kangar MP), former Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin (Jasin MP), former Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib (Pasir Salak MP), Datuk Rais Yatim (Jelebu MP) and Datuk Napsiah Omar (Kuala Pilah MP).

Four ministers were defeated in the general election while three others did not seek re-election.

Those who lost were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob, Second Finance Minister and Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa.

Datuk Lim Ah Lek (Human Resources), Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha (Defence) and Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali (Minister in the Prime Minister's Department) did not seek re-election.

Tajol Rosli contested and won the Kenering State seat in Perak and has been appointed Menteri Besar.

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Fong Chan Onn is expected to be made a full minister to replace Ah Lek at the Human Resources Ministry.

From Sarawak, Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu's Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad is likely to be promoted to full minister.

A minister or deputy minister could also come from Terengganu despite the defeat of all BN MPs who contested in the State.

The job could go to Deputy Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Idris Jusoh, who will first have to be made a Senator.

There are also 11 vacancies for the posts of deputy ministers.

Four who lost in the elections were Datuk Paduka Ibrahim Ali (PM's Department), Datuk Dr Ibrahim Saad (Transport), Datuk Abu Bakar Daud (Science, Technology and Environment), Datuk Dr Tengku Mahmud Tengku Mansor (Agriculture).

Four who did not contest were Datuk Wong See Wah (Finance), Datuk Dr Affifuddin Omar (Human Resources), Dr Goh Cheng Teik (Land and Cooperative Development) and Datuk Teng Gaik Kwan (Culture, Arts and Tourism).

Three others who did not seek reelection as they contested State seats were Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman (PM's Department), Datuk Mohd Ali Rustam (Health) and Datuk Idris Jusoh (Entrepreneur Development).

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