

**Abdullah's new cabinet sworn in
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Malaysia's cabinet was sworn in this morning in a ceremony at the royal palace, a day after Prime Minister Abdullah unveiled the new line-up. MCPX

Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak led the 32 ministers and 34 deputy ministers as they took the oath of office before King Mizan Zainal Abidin.

Two did not appear today. In a late development, Tengku Azlan Abu Bakar and Anifah Aman - both from Umno - had declined to accept their deputy minister positions.

According to the New Straits Times, the pair 'threw a tantrum' claiming they are 'senior enough' to be made full ministers.

Abdullah has cut down the size of the cabinet from 90 to 68 positions, and axed several political veterans in an effort to rejuvenate his administration after unprecedented losses in March 8 polls.

The ruling coalition surrendered its two-thirds majority for the first time in four decades, and lost four more states in a drubbing that has triggered calls for Abdullah's resignation.

Trade minister Rafidah Aziz, who had held the post since 1987, was the biggest casualty of the reshuffle, which also saw some government critics given influential roles.

Radzi resigns

In another sign of trouble brewing in the ruling Umno, former home minister Radzi Sheikh Ahmad, who was dropped from the cabinet, resigned as the party's secretary-general today.

"I have offered my resignation as secretary-general of Umno and of Barisan Nasional and the prime minister has accepted my resignation," said Radzi, whose role had placed him among a handful of top party leaders.

"I feel that I cannot work effectively any more in the present circumstances," he said, but sidestepped queries over whether he had decided to resign rather than face dismissal.

"It is (Abdullah's) prerogative, he wants to have new faces," he told reporters.

"In politics there are always people taking over, no one is indispensable in politics, it may appear to be but life goes on."