

**New PM urged to name 'clean' cabinet**  
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New premier Najib Abdul Razak must install a cabinet untainted by corruption in a reshuffle expected this week if he is to realise his reform ambitions, party insiders and analysts say.

Najib, who was sworn into power last week, has announced ambitious plans to overhaul the ruling party Umno, which was humbled in elections last year by voters who see it as corrupt and out of touch.

"In appointing a new cabinet, Najib must choose ministers who have three things - integrity, integrity and integrity," said Megat Najmuddin Khas, a member of Umno's disciplinary committee.

"He must minimise the negative perception that people have of the government and ensure that he gets people who are honest and who are credible," he told AFP.

"He must not think of only appointing party chiefs to the cabinet but also people who have the right credentials and who the public can trust."

Former premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who had a landslide win in 2004 a year after coming to power, squandered his mandate and was never able to pull off his own plans to tackle corruption and improve race relations.

Disappointment over the lack of action was a major factor in elections a year ago that dealt the Umno-led coalition an unprecedented rebuke, with the opposition winning five of the 13 states and a third of seats in parliament.

**New cabinet could be unveiled tomorrow**

Observers say Najib should learn from the mistakes of his predecessor when he selects his new team - an announcement is tipped for Wednesday - but that may be easier said than done.

"It won't be a totally clean and credible government," said Muaz Omar, an analyst with political consultancy KRA.

"Although there will be a few clean ministers, it is very likely that Najib will have to reward his loyalists and there will therefore be some who are not so clean," he said.

Muaz said that after the 2008 polls Abdullah tried to freshen up the cabinet with new faces, but suffered a backlash from within the party after leaving out several powerbrokers.

Khairy Jamaluddin, the new leader of Umno's influential youth wing, said it would be a major challenge to reform the faction-ridden party that has ruled Malaysia since independence in 1957.

"It is not going to be easy to push through these reforms through the party, but if the PM wants to do this I will fully support it," he said.

It is unclear whether Khairy would be given a spot in the cabinet as his ardent critic, former PM Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is said to be against his inclusion.

Mahathir, who is seen to be close to Najib, has argued that Khairy was implicated by the Umno disciplinary committee for vote-buying.

### **No honeymoon for Najib**

Najib has conceded there is no time to spare.

"I don't think there is a 100-day (honeymoon) period," he told state news agency Bernama this week.

"I have to pass two quick tests. One is the formation of a new cabinet and the other is my maiden speech as PM. If both of these are well accepted by the people, I believe they will be more open in accepting my leadership."

The Star daily said today that the cabinet is likely to be slimmed down from the current 27 ministries with 31 ministers, and that Umno's coalition partners have been told they may get fewer seats.

Party insiders say Najib is set to retain the finance portfolio - critical during the global economic crisis - and that Umno's deputy leader Muhyiddin Yassin will be deputy prime minister and defence minister.

The party's three newly appointed vice-presidents - Education Minister Hishammudin Hussein, National Unity Minister Shafie Apdal and Minister in the PM's Department Zahid Hamidi - are expected to be handed key portfolios.

But Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar and Tourism Minister Azalina Othman, who are seen as close to Abdullah, are at risk of losing their jobs.

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