

PM to unveil new cabinet at 3pm tomorrow
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New premier Najib Abdul Razak will be announcing his cabinet at 3pm at the PM's Department tomorrow.

He will meet Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin at 11am to seek his consent before his announcement.

According to a statement from the PM's Office, the ministers and deputy ministers will take their oaths of office, loyalty and secrecy at 9.30am on Friday at the Istana Negara.

Najib, who is tipped to unveil a streamlined cabinet aimed at helping him push through promised reforms, will make the announcement before travelling to Thailand for a regional summit.

The New Straits Times reported today that the premier, who leads the ruling party Umno, has yet to meet with all its partners in the Barisan Nasional coalition on the formation of his new line-up.

Najib met MCA chief Ong Tee Keat and Gerakan chief Koh Tsu Koon as well as leaders from a few other minor component parties.

This morning, he had separate meetings with MIC president S Samy Vellu and PBB supremo Abdul Taib Mahmud.

Muhyiddin to take over defence

Najib is likely to reveal a slimmed down cabinet from the current 27 ministries with 32 ministers, and that coalition parties have been told they may get fewer seats.

Insiders say Najib is likely to retain the finance portfolio - seen as critical during the global economic crisis - and that Umno deputy leader Muhyiddin Yassin is tipped to be deputy prime minister and defence minister.

khairy jamaluddin interview 230209 14Speculation is rife that the youth and sports minister post, which is traditionally-slotted for Umno Youth chief, will not be given to Khairy Jamaluddin.

It may go to his rival Mukhriz Mahathir, who is youngest son of former premier Mahathir, a influential advisor to Najib.

Najib has unveiled an ambitious agenda to overhaul Umno, which was humbled in elections last year by voters who see it as corrupt and out of touch.

But the new premier was dealt a rebuke by voters yesterday after losing two of three by-elections seen as a referendum on his leadership.

Najib's announcement tomorrow will be broadcast live by state-owned RTM.

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