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First cabinet meeting by Wednesday, says PM

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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday said the new cabinet would have its first meeting by Wednesday, indicating that his line-up could be announced as early as Monday.

Abdullah, who was holding meetings with top civil servants at his office here yesterday, said he would be meeting all Barisan Nasional component party heads from today before deciding on his line-up.

The cabinet would reflect the power-sharing concept of BN and include all communities, he said.

When pressed further on how this would be effected, he declined further comment but said smilingly, "Wait a few more days."

Over the past few days, many had been speculating on the new cabinet line-up.

BN component parties are believed to be working out the details before submitting their lists to the prime minister.

There is speculation over who in the previous cabinet would be

retained by Abdullah. The prime minister had said that not all ministers who were re-elected would be re-appointed.

BN won 140 seats to have a simple majority in parliament while the opposition has 82.

Although MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting had said that he would decline a cabinet post, Abdullah still has the final say.

The MCA won 15 parliamentary seats of the 40 it contested while Gerakan only captured two out of 12. The MIC won three parliamentary seats.

There is also talk that BN component parties from Sabah and Sarawak may seek more representation in the cabinet, having won 24 out of 25 seats and 30 out of 31 seats contested respectively.

Umno, which won 78 seats out of 117 contested, has traditionally accounted for the most number of ministers.

Abdullah had earlier said that he had not made any promises to anyone and that he had a "free hand" to choose after the elec-

tions.

In Sarawak, the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu Sarawak (PBB) won 14 seats, Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP-six), Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS-six), and Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP-four).

In Sabah, Umno won 13 seats, Pertubuhan Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Bersatu (Upko-four), Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS-three), Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP-two), Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS) and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) one each.

In the cabinet formed after the 2004 general election, Abdullah gave Umno 21 ministerial posts, 18 deputy minister posts and 11 parliamentary secretary positions.

The PBB had a quota of two ministers, one deputy minister and one parliamentary secretary, the SUPP had one minister and one deputy minister while Upko and the PBS each had one minister. The SPDP had one deputy minister. — Bernama



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi may name the cabinet as early as Monday