

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	16/4/2013

PRIME NEWS

# Inclusiveness at heart of line-up

NST-16/4/2013

**DESIRE FOR CHANGE:** Najib says his Transformation Team will fulfil needs and expectations of the people

KUALA LUMPUR

NEW faces will make up 33 per cent of candidates vying for parliamentary seats and 49 per cent of those contesting state seats in Barisan Nasional's 13th General Election candidates' list, which will be unveiled today.

The line-up reflects the inclusiveness of the coalition, guided by the 1Malaysia principle and built around the thrusts of trustworthiness and commitment to transformation.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the candidates contesting the 222 parliamentary seats and 505 state seats were a combination of the new and experienced to carry out the transformation agenda of the nation.

Najib, who is also BN chairman, called the candidates his "Transformation Team" who represented "a solid and strong government that will fulfil the needs and expectations of the people, whose expectations matter most to us".

"The people will not be disappointed with this list.

"This is not just about winning the election. At the heart of it all is the ability of these candidates to deliver the goods to the people.

"That is our principle and philosophy. We need to look beyond this general election," he said at the BN headquarters at Putra World Trade Centre after handing over the *watikah*, or letters of authorisation, to menteri besar, chief ministers, state election directors and component party leaders yesterday.

Najib was succinct in addressing concerns that his choice of candidates would not go down well with some quarters.

"I am more worried about disappointing the people," he said, adding that dropping some names was inevitable as what mattered

most was meeting the expectations of voters and delivering on the promises in the manifesto to the people.

"Our next challenge is to communicate this line-up and I am confident it will be well-accepted by the people as it (the list) will show our desire for change."

Summing up the line-up, Najib said the leadership wanted to be as inclusive as possible in the selection process.

A significant number of professionals, including professors, lawyers, doctors and diplomatic administrative officers, and those from government bodies and agencies, as well as ulama, are included in the line-up.

The line-up has set a precedent as academic qualification is a prerequisite for first-time parliamentary candidates, with the exception of a few who have the experience as elected representatives.

"Ninety one per cent of them have at least a diploma. Some of the candidates (were also picked because they) are popular with the grassroots.

"Not all of our wakil rakyat will be in the government. Many will be backbenchers and serve the people. The determining factor here is their ability to become grassroots leaders.

"We also took into account the need for us to field experienced elected representatives, be it in the government or as a wakil rakyat.

"This balance of new and experienced is crucial as we not only need to push for change but also as a party that will be given a fresh mandate to form the government. We need those with the ability to administer the government and deliver to the people."

Najib said if BN was not retained, its efforts to meet the aspirations and expectations of the people



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, and his deputy, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, during the meeting to give out the letters of authorisation in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Khairull Azry Bidin

could be hampered.

Taking questions from the media, Najib said women and youth would have a fair representation in the line-up.

"Sometimes, it can be little bit problematic, because of the nature of the constituencies.

"We try to (field as many as possible) but it is not easy as there are constraints. But we will add on to the appointment of women in Dewan Negara and other (platforms)."

He said those who were not chosen had not "failed" but, instead, were making way for BN to respond to the demands for change.

"Some of our members have to make way. If they don't, there will be no change.

"That is why I want to thank the wakil rakyat, including those who had served in the administration.

"The government appreciates what they have done, and I hope they continue to support the party and contribute during the general election."

Najib said the list was final and did not require tweaking.

He hinted that some cabinet members, menteri besar and chief ministers would be replaced.

He said there would be major changes in the strategies used in

states that BN had lost in the last election, including fielding heavyweights, to counter big names contesting for the opposition.

"It does not matter how great the opposition candidate is. We must have a candidate who has a chance of winning." Additional reporting by Rozanna Latiff

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