

PM: Umno reps willing to make way for new faces
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 3 – Some Umno lawmakers have expressed their willingness to allow new candidates to take their place in the next election, the prime minister said today.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak said he has met some of the elected representatives in “private”, and that they were willing to allow new candidates to contest.

“Some have met me in private, I do not have to mention who,” Najib (picture) said during a brief news conference here.

“New faces are needed (for people) to see Umno as a party which has new blood,” said the Umno president.

He said that this was part of his plan to project Umno as a “dynamic party, ready for change.”

Najib said he viewed this year’s party assembly as a success, and that it was a sign of Umno’s “recovery” since Election 2008.

“This is the rise of a new (party) spirit,” he said.

But the PM remained cautious when asked to comment on whether Barisan Nasional (BN) would be able to wipe out Pakatan Rakyat (PR) in the next national polls.

“I don’t want to underrate the opposition, (that is) one of the mistakes that we could make,” he stressed.

Prime Minister Najib is said to need a marked improvement from the last polls to retain his position and only a return of Barisan Nasional’s customary two-thirds majority of Parliament can guarantee he remains in office.

BN ceded 82 federal seats and five state governments to the opposition in the landmark March 2008 election.

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