

BN finalises candidates list for GE13
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 19 — Top Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders met last night to finalise the candidates list for 222 federal and 505 state seats in Election 2013, which will be held within a month, sources say.

The Malaysian Insider understands Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak chaired the meeting with his deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and other leaders to decide the coalition's slate of candidates.

"PM Najib (picture) met with the BN leaders and also the coalition war room strategists last night over the final list," a source told The Malaysian Insider, indicating that the general election is "around the corner".

The source added that there will be a greater number of new faces although Najib is expected to retain some veterans for continuity, especially those who scored high marks in the government annual report card to be announced tonight.

The prime minister is to give a nationally-televised speech tonight to list the achievements of his government in what has been termed a "state of the union" address similar to the United States.

He is to speak about progress in both the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) and Government Transformation Programme (GTP) in the 45-minute speech.

"Some ministers will be dropped. Others will be shuffled when the time comes to name the new Cabinet after the elections," the source said, adding BN was confident of doing well to form the next government.

The Star daily reported this morning that BN will drop up to 40 per cent of its veterans in the coming polls, saying Najib had identified those to be excluded while others have volunteered to step down.

The Star named those stepping down — former International Trade and Industry Minister Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz (Kuala Kangsar), former Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid (Padang Besar), former Home Minister Datuk Seri Radzi Sheikh Ahmad (Kangar) and former Housing and Local Government Minister Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting (Kulai).

The daily said others who volunteered to step down include former Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) chairman Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar for the Kepala Batas and Kota Tinggi seats

Respectively, but Najib was weighing his options as no "proper successors" have been found.

Others who might face the axe include former Cabinet minister and Pengerang MP Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said and Energy, Green Technology Minister Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui, the SUPP president who has been the MP for Miri for the past six terms.

The MCA-controlled newspaper said other senior MPs scheduled to retire are former Human Resources Minister Tan Sri Dr Fong Chan Onn (Alor Gajah) and former Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Leo Michael Toyad (Mukah).

Three former deputy ministers not expected to be fielded are Tengku Tan Sri Azlan Sultan Abu Bakar, Datuk Noraini Ahmad and Datuk Seri Sulaiman Taib. They are the MPs for Jerantut, Parit Sulong and Kota Samarahan respectively.

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