

**Najib: Incumbents dropped from BN's list 'did not fail'**  
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**By Syed Jaymal Zahiid**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 15 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today incumbents dropped from Barisan Nasional's (BN) candidate list "did not fail" but were removed to meet voters' demand for change.

One-third of the coalition's parliamentary candidates and half of its state seat line-up will feature new faces, a decision based on the present voter sentiment, the BN chairman said.

"To those who were not selected, this does not mean they had failed or are problematic or there is a rift but in a situation where voters are calling for change, some of our members are forced to make way.

"If they do not make way there will be no reform," Najib (picture) told a press conference after handing out the respective candidate list to the coalition's state chiefs here.

He stressed that their removal did not mean the leadership does not appreciate their contribution.

Najib's remark was likely made to appease disgruntled hopefuls who failed to make the cut and could possibly sabotage the coalition's Election 2013 campaign.

In a closed-door meeting with the coalition's state chiefs last week, Najib had hinted that he would seek to reshuffle BN's line-up and demanded complete co-operation from all leaders, pointing out it would be "impossible" to please everyone when drawing up the final candidate list.

The meeting followed repeated pleas for unity amid fears of sabotage by incumbents who failed to make the cut.

Internal subversion had been one of the major contributing factors for BN's record losses in the 2008 general election.

Najib's decision to keep most incumbents on as Election 2013 candidates may reflect that concern.

The Umno president said, however, that BN would need their experience to ensure continuity should it be re-elected at the May 5 polls.

"We must not only portray renewal, but as a government that would be given a new mandate, we must also have those who are able to administer a government that is accountable to the people," he remarked.

BN component party leaders will announce their candidates lists today while the respective state liaison chairmen will disclose the list tomorrow.

Eleven per cent of BN candidates in Election 2013 will be women, said a source.

Calling it a "dream team", Najib said the "line-up we have today is the best line-up that we have prepared".

“We take into consideration voter sentiment or expectation for a change in the Barisan Nasional line-up so in that sense for Parliament we have lined up about 33 per cent new faces.

“At the state level, the number of new faces is 49 per cent. This is to fulfil the demand from voters that BN and Umno be ready for change,” he said.

The move comes amid criticism that the Umno president was carrying “too much deadwood” in his Cabinet and should reorganise his team to drop non-performers if he wants to boost support for his government.

The Malaysian Insider had previously reported that a Cabinet reshuffle is definitely in the pipeline, with several ministers and veterans expected to be dropped.

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