

**Najib fields 80pc new faces in Selangor, Khir Toyo dropped**  
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**By Syed Jaymal Zahiid**

SHAH ALAM, April 16 — More than two-thirds of Barisan Nasional's (BN) candidates in Selangor are new faces, a move that could help boost its chances of recapturing the country's richest state at the May 5 polls, coalition chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today.

Najib, who is also the Selangor BN chief, said at the unveiling of the state's candidate list this morning that the drastic move was needed to "protect" the party and meet the aspirations of the state's voters.

The most notable victim of the mass culling is former Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo, whose leadership was marred by allegations of corruption and power abuse.

"I am sorry that we cannot please everyone but we must focus towards protecting the party and the aspirations of the people," he told a packed room at the state's Umno headquarters here.

BN's defeat in Selangor in Election 2008, the first since independence in 1957, dealt a severe blow to the coalition's credentials as the country's dominant political force.

Putrajaya, the federal capital, is in Selangor which is also one of the region's industrial capitals.

Najib had said that losing the state for the second term is not an option. His self-appointment as BN's Selangor election director is testament to his determination to wrest the state back from Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

"BN has learned from its mistakes after five years of PR rule in Selangor. I promise that all promises will be met and all pledges will be fulfilled," he said today.

The coalition will unveil its Selangor manifesto here tomorrow night which will kickstart its Election 2013 campaign just two days before nomination day on Saturday.

Selangor BN polls co-ordinator Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Mohamed said the coalition's Selangor line-up features a crop of young leaders who has done continuous ground work for the past five years.

"This reflects the party's transformation process," he told reporters after holding a short meeting with candidates here.

He echoed Najib's view that the party did what was necessary to ensure BN wins with a bigger mandate in Selangor, adding that the coalition was targeting a two-thirds majority.

"I believe we can win Selangor. We are striking at two-thirds," he said.

The coalition is also looking to bank in on the popularity of leaders seen close to the national leadership to recapture some seats.

Mohd Zin's brother, Nasarruddin, will confront PKR's caretaker Mentri Besar Tan Sri Abdul

Khalid Ibrahim in Pelabuhan Klang while BN secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Mansor's brother, Tengku Rethwan, will fight PKR's communication director and incumbent Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad for the Seri Setia state seat.

Meanwhile, bigwigs like Datuk Seri Noh Omar, who is Selangor's BN deputy chief, will defend his Tanjong Karang seat while Mohd Zin, a former minister under Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's government, will defend Sepang. Both are federal seats.

BN's Malay lynchpin Umno will contest 35 of Selangor's 56 state seats while its senior allies, the MCA and MIC, will take 14 and three state seats respectively. The rest will go to Gerakan and PPP.

At the federal level, Umno will stand in nine seats while the MCA and MIC will contest seven and four seats respectively. PPP and Gerakan will take one each.

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