

Najib keeps two spots for MCA in new government, say sources
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 16 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak has reserved two seats for MCA leaders in his administration once the party completes its elections and reverses its stand to opt out of the government due to its electoral losses, say sources.

MCA won only seven of the 37 parliamentary seats it contested in Election 2013, prompting party president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek to reiterate that it will not join the Cabinet as it performed worse than in the 2008 general election.

The Malaysian Insider understands the transport minister's post is being kept for MCA deputy president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai if he manages to lead the party once Dr Chua (picture) vacates the party presidency.

Another slot reserved is the deputy minister post in the Finance Ministry.

"If Liow takes up the post now, he will be sacked from the party and cannot go for the MCA presidency. So the prime minister is waiting for the MCA elections to be done with first," a source told The Malaysian Insider.

Najib named 31 ministers to his Cabinet yesterday, with the sole Chinese minister being Transparency International Malaysia president Datuk Paul Low while PBS's Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching was made deputy minister in the Education Ministry.

The prime minister also named Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein as the acting transport minister and only named one deputy for the Finance Ministry, which sources say point to vacancies kept for the MCA.

In the previous Cabinet, there were six ministers and 10 deputy ministers who were Chinese, from both peninsula and east Malaysian parties.

MCA elders and previous presidents have asked Dr Chua to quit immediately but he has insisted on remaining until the party elections are completed between June and December.

BN sources say there is a fear that Dr Chua might still want to stay on as party president despite declaring his intentions to step down to take responsibility for the party losses.

"He packed the MCA candidates list with his supporters in GE13 so that he can keep the presidency. So anything can happen although he says he won't stay on," said a BN source.

Another BN source said Dr Chua had "given up" the Gelang Patah, Wangsa Maju and Kuantan federal seats to Umno in return for having a free hand to select MCA candidates in all other federal and state seats.

"The BN war room agreed to his request but as you can see, Umno lost in all the three federal seats and so did MCA in most other seats," the source told The Malaysian Insider.

BN politicians have blamed the "Chinese tsunami" for their poorer performance in the May 5 general election although most analysts point out that the coalition lost support from all

racers in urban areas, reflecting an urban-rural divide.

BN only won 133 federal and 275 state seats in 12 states in Election 2013, down from 140 federal and 306 out of 505 state seats in the 2008 general election.

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