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# Abdullah to announce Cabinet today

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## Press conference to be telecast live

**PUTRAJAYA:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is expected to unveil his new Cabinet line-up today at a press conference to be telecast live.

Aides said Abdullah would have an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin in the morning and then return to his office to make the announcement at around noon.

"The swearing-in of the ministers before Tuanku Mizan will take place on Wednesday," said a source.

It is learnt that Istana Negara has already sent out the invitations for the ceremony.

Speculation has been rife about the size of the Cabinet but it could be the reduction of the entire administration - including deputy ministers and parliamentary secretaries - that could be the surprise today.

Before dissolution, Abdullah's total administration numbered a whopping 90 people - 32 ministers, 39 deputies and 19 parliamentary secretaries.

At present, Barisan Nasional has 140 MPs and the size of the administration has to be cut down. Otherwise there will not be enough backbenchers to support government bills in the Dewan Rakyat.

With the Opposition having 82 MPs, the Government must ensure there were enough backbenchers to neutralise them when it

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A SENIOR BARISAN POLITICIAN

comes to voting on any matter.

A senior Barisan politician expected the number of deputy ministers and parliamentary secretaries to be cut down substantially.

"The administration could be around the 70 mark and I think the number of parliamentary secretaries could be less than 10," the politician added.

However, there has been talk of maintaining the size of the Cabinet by bringing in non-politicians to handle key ministries that required specialised know-how.

"The Prime Minister brought in Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop in 2004 by making him a senator. This will be a good way of tapping talents outside the normal political circle," said the same Barisan man.