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Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	8/4/2009



Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in light-hearted banter with NST reporter Hamidah Atan at the lunch with pressmen at Kelab Tasik Presint 8, Putrajaya, yesterday. — NST picture by Afendi Mohamed

Abdullah to press: Reach for the stars

PUTRAJAYA: Former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is savouring his post-premiership days, saying he is now free to dictate his affairs.

At a lunch with members of the Putrajaya press bureaus, he said he could now put in more time reading and going

for long drives, something he loves doing but did not have much time for when holding the country's highest office.

"The time I had on my hands (as PM), I spent on reading the papers, memorandums and matters of the administration."

Abdullah said he had no problems adjusting to the change in pace.

Also present at the lunch hosted by his former Communications Unit was his wife, Tun Jeanne Abdullah.

Abdullah also expressed gratitude to Yang di-Pertuan

Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin for bestowing him and his wife the Tunship on the day he officially handed over the prime ministership to his successor, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, on Friday.

"But I am still me."

To the media members, Ab-

dullah thanked them for being co-operative throughout his administration.

He told them to reach for the stars in their careers and be mindful of the challenges before them, saying that he understood that the role they played was not an easy one.