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# 'I am taking over with a great sense of humility'

PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday said taking over the country's premiership from Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was not about power or status.

"It is not a question of status or power but a great responsibility of the rakyat's expectations and aspirations which the government and I must shoulder.

"It is, indeed, a great honour for me but I am taking over (as prime minister) with a great sense of humility.

"I know I must do only the best for the people so that they will have confidence in the government, and always feel that this is the government they can rely on, the government that cares and works for the people."

Najib said he would accompany Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for an audience with Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin today.

"Subject to the king's consent, Friday will be the ceremony (where Najib is expected to be sworn in as the sixth prime minister)."

He said this after giving away RM80 million in financial aid under the economic stimulus package to Tamil primary schools at the Education Ministry.

Najib also said yesterday's cabinet meeting, the last chaired by Abdullah, was very sentimental.

"I think a lot of us (ministers) were quite emotional.

"Pak Lah was very open about what he had done and what he hoped the new leadership will do. Above all, he is supportive of the new leadership.

"He will always be there for us if we need him but he will not interfere and criticise us. If we need advice, he will be there for us.

"I truly appreciate his kind words and I know he means it. In the last few months, he talked to me in the same manner. I am confident that Pak Lah will be supportive of whatever we intend to do."

Najib said the government would organise a farewell for Abdullah.

"He is not for all this pomp and pageantry but we will organise something as befitting a prime minister of five years. He has touched us."

Asked on reports by political analysts that he would introduce a leaner cabinet, Najib said he had not decided.

"They can read my mind? I have not decided."

On Barisan Nasional's chances in the Bukit Gantang, Bukit Selambau and Batang Ai by-elections, Najib said "we will do our level best".

"We have a good fighting chance but there will be all kinds of things thrown against us.

"The most important thing is that the people must feel that the government cares for them. This is the government that will work for the people," he said.