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Mahathir keen to attend Najib's swearing-in - if he's invited

LONDON: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would like to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak as Malaysia's sixth Prime Minister.

"I do not know whether I am invited but if I am invited, I would like to go," he said.

He was speaking to Malaysian reporters on Wednesday just before

departing for Malaysia.

He was in London to give a talk on the global financial crisis at the Royal Commonwealth Society.

The former prime minister said he would support any move for a leaner Cabinet as it was unnecessary to have so many members.

"We have had an expansion of the Cabinet under (Datuk Seri) Abdullah

(Ahmad Badawi)'s leadership but I think that's not necessary," he said.

He said any plan to merge several ministries to address redundancy would be good as "prime ministers have been using this kind (of posts) as a reward for support."

"He (Najib) must choose the right people who are free from involvement in money politics," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there would always be political corruption but that the level had become blatant.

"The people know (about it). They don't even bother to hide," he said in response to Umno disciplinary board member Tan Sri Megat Najmuddin Megat Khas' statement that strong evidence was needed to act against party leaders being investigated for

money politics.

On Abdullah saying that the bridge to replace the Causeway was more important to him than anything else, Dr Mahathir replied there were many other things besides the bridge.

"The railway line, giving back the deposit for the Bakun hydroelectric project to the Arabs and kowtowing to Singapore," he said.