

31/12/1999

Death of a statesman

Sharifah Al-Attas

1976

THE political tide this year ebbs and flows. The crests of its waves are high, its troughs deep. On January 14, Malaysia's second Prime Minister passes away in London, and her third is sworn in the following day - having been deputy a mere 17 months.

On March 5, Malaysia's new leader Datuk Hussein Onn selects Education Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad for Number Two in his Cabinet - a triumph for the man who, in 1969, was expelled from Umno.

Expulsion is also the order of the day for Datuk Harun Idris. On March 18, he is deprived of party membership; the thread of his story runs through the year, for on May 18, he is found guilty of corruption - and on October 23, he returns to the party fold.