

31/12/1999

Foundation of a nation

Sharifah Al-Attas

1981

A flurry of releases punctuates the year - that of Abdul Samad Ismail (announced on January 31), arrested under the Internal Security Act;; of Abdullah Majid (on February 21), also detained under the ISA; and of Datuk Harun Idris, who walks out of the capital's General Hospital on July 31, his sentence for corruption remitted. He is later granted a royal pardon. The outlawed give themselves up. On January 5, the Home Affairs Minister announces the surrender of Communist Party of Malaya chairman Musa Ahmad; and on June 11, gang leader Botak Chin surrenders to the hangman's noose. The year's most significant event, though, takes place on July 16 - when new Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad takes the oath of office as Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister.