

19/06/1999

Three new faces with PM on the podium

UMNO's traditional flag-raising ceremony to mark the opening of the annual general assembly was held yesterday with three new faces accompanying party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the podium.

Vice president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is assuming the duties of deputy president, newly-appointed secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and acting youth head Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein took part in the proceedings for the first time.

They were accompanied by Wanita chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.

At 9am, Dr Mahathir arrived with his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, and were welcomed by Abdullah and his wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood.

With the sounds of the kompang reverberating the Putra World Trade Centre, they were greeted by other party leaders before proceeding to the podium.

Dr Mahathir then inspected a guard of honour comprising 100 members of the Youth and Wanita brigades accompanied by Hishammuddin and Siti Zaharah.

He then hoisted the Umno flag to the strains of the party's signature song, Bersatu, Bersedia, Berkhidmat, with Abdullah and Khalil by his side.

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