

A man for all seasons

You can't keep a good man down. The new Prime Minister's innate strength, tested several times during his career, will put him in good stead for the challenges that lie ahead, writes **ZARINAH DAUD.**

STAR - 1 NOV 2003

DATUK Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, whose political career began during the premiership of the late Tun Hussein Onn, has the distinction of being one of the longest-serving cabinet members under Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed.

He served briefly as parliamentary secretary of the Federal Territory Ministry after winning the Kepala Batas parliamentary seat in the 1978 general election.

Under Dr Mahathir, who took the reins as national leader in 1981, Abdullah held numerous posts, starting with Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

He was then elevated to the post of Education Minister in 1984, a portfolio he held for nearly two years.

In the subsequent Cabinet reshuffle in 1986, Abdullah was appointed Defence Minister and held the post for a year.

However, Abdullah was on "sabbatical leave" - a term he used at the recent Umno general assembly - when he was dropped from the Cabinet for three years and eight months (1987 to 1991.)

But his loyalty to Umno paid off. Abdullah bounced back when Dr Mahathir reinstated him in the Cabinet and gave him the job as Foreign Minister in 1991. He kept that post for

eight years.

The position of Deputy Prime Minister was vacant following the expulsion of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in 1998. Subsequently, Abdullah took over the job in February 1999.

He was appointed Home Minister the same year.

Abdullah started his career as a civil servant after obtaining his Bachelor of Islamic Studies from Universiti Malaya in 1964.

He was the assistant secretary in the Public Services Department from 1964 to 1969 and was promoted to principal assistant secretary to the National

Operation Council in the Prime Minister's Department and held the post until 1971.

He was later appointed director-general of the then Culture, Youth and Sports Ministry and, in 1974, was made its deputy secretary-general.

Abdullah, however, left the government service to pursue a political career. In the 1978 general election, he won the Kepala Batas parliamentary seat and has held it for six terms.

His political career in Umno started in 1979 when he became the Kepala Batas Umno division chairman, a post he holds until today.

He was elected as supreme council member in 1981.

Subsequently, he became Umno vice-president in 1984, 1987 and 1990 but lost the post in 1993.

Many had thought that that would be the end of his political career but Abdullah was, however, appointed to the supreme council.

Like any seasoned politician, Abdullah made a dramatic comeback and won the post again in 1996.

He was appointed Umno deputy president in May 2000 following the expulsion of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from the party.

And the rest is history.

DATUK SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI

Date of birth: November 26, 1939

Place of birth: Kepala Batas, Penang

Wife: Datin Paduka Seri Endon Mahmood

Children: Kamaluddin and Nori

Father: Datuk Ahmad Badawi Abdullah Fahim

Mother: Datuk Kailan Hassan

Education: SK Permatang Bertam

: Bukit Mertajam High School, Penang

: Methodist Boys' School

: Bachelor of Islamic Studies (Hons) Universiti Malaya



Career (Government)

Feb 1999 - Oct 2003: Deputy Prime Minister and Home Affairs Minister

1991 - 1999: Foreign Affairs Minister

1986 - 1987: Defence Minister

1984 - 1986: Education Minister

1981 - 1984: Minister in the Prime Minister's Department

1980 - 1981: Deputy Minister of Federal Territory Ministry

1978 - 1980: Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Territory Ministry

1974 - 1978: Deputy Secretary-General of Culture, Youth and Sports Ministry

1971 - 1973: Director-General of Culture, Youth and Sports Ministry

1969 - 1971: Principal Assistant Secretary to the National Operations Council (NOC), Prime Minister's Department

1964 - 1969: Assistant Secretary of Public Services Department

Career (Politics)

May 2000 - Oct 2003: Umno Deputy President

1996 - 2000: Umno Vice-President

1993 - 1996: Umno Supreme Council Member

1987 - 1990: Umno Vice-President

1984 - 1987: Umno Vice-President

1981: Umno Supreme Council Member

Since 1979: Kepala Batas Umno Division Chief

Since 1978: Kepala Batas MP