

Pak Lah is PM

STAR - 1 NOV 2003

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was sworn in as the country's fifth Prime Minister before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong at the Istana Negara yesterday, ushering in a new chapter in Malaysia's history.

He succeeded Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad (later made a Tun together with his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali), who had held the helm for 22 years. The ceremony began at 3.05pm in the Balairong Seri with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rahman walking up to the dais and standing in front of the throne.

The National Anthem was then played.

Following that, Abdullah, who will be 64 next month, was invited to receive his letter of appointment from the King.

Accompanied by the Head of Ceremonies, Abdullah approached the throne to receive it and took his oath of office and loyalty and oath of secrecy.

Abdullah then proceeded to a table to sign the instruments of office, witnessed by Chief Justice Tan Sri Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman.

The documents were then handed to Samsudin.

Federal Territory Mufti Prof Madya Mohammed Yusoff Hussain recited the doa selamat and the ceremony concluded at about 3.15pm.

Among those present to witness the historic event were Abdullah's wife, Datin Paduka Seri Endon Mahmood, Dr Mahathir and wife, Cabinet Ministers and foreign dignitaries.

The swearing-in was immediately followed by the conferment of Tunship on Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah.

Dr Mahathir was awarded the Seri Maharaja Mangku Negara while Dr Siti Hasmah received the Seri Setia Mahkota award.

Both awards carry the title Tun, which is limited to 25 people at any one time.

The ceremony ended at about 3.30pm after the National anthem was played again.

The King and Queen then left the Throne Room accom-

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□ **REPORTS BY MERGAWATI ZULFAKAR, FOONG PEK YEE, SHAHANAAB HABIB, M. KRISHNAMOORTHY, SA'ODAH ELIAS, DEVID RAJAH, ANTHONY TAN, ZUI AHMAD, WANI MUTHIAH PRISCILLA DIELENBERG, LEONG SHEN-LI, IZATUN SHARI, SIM LEI LEI, DALILAH IBRAHIM, LAM LI, RENEE CHOONG, K. ANURAJ CECIL FUNG, OLIVIA LEE AND S. ARULDASS.**

□ **Photos by UU BAN LEONG, KAMARUL ARIFFIN, ART CHEN, RAJA FAISAL HISHAM, ZABIDI TUSIN, NORAFIFI EHSAN AND AZHAR MAHFOF.**

Desk file to signify transfer of power

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panied by Abdullah and Endon, followed by Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah.

Throughout the ceremonies, Dr Mahathir was seen holding back his emotions and deep in thought most of the time.

Later, in Putrajaya, Dr Mahathir officially handed over the leadership of the Federal Government to Abdullah.

Bernama reported that the ceremony was held at the Prime Minister's Office on the fifth floor of Bangunan Perdana Putra, the seat of government.

Dr Mahathir handed over the desk file

to signify the transfer of responsibilities of the high office to Abdullah in the presence of the Chief Secretary to the Government.

Following this, Abdullah, who is also the acting Umno president, had a closed-door meeting with Dr Mahathir.

Outside, Cabinet ministers, senior government officers and scores of ministry staff and hundreds of Putrajaya residents waited to bid farewell to Dr Mahathir.

Abdullah, who was born on Nov 26, 1939 in Kepala Batas, Penang, was appointed Deputy Prime Minister by Dr

Mahathir on Jan 8, 1999, which was a Friday, like yesterday, and also in the month of Ramadan.

Dr Mahathir then walked over to the lobby where he clocked out at 5.06pm, witnessed by staff of the Prime Minister's Department.

Abdullah then walked with Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah to their car.

Dr Mahathir spent about 20 minutes shaking hands with the officers and staff as he walked towards his car.

After seeing Dr Mahathir off, the new Prime Minister waved to the people present and then got into his official car.