

31 OCT 2003

Abdullah-Oath

ABDULLAH TAKES OATH OF OFFICE AS FIFTH MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 31 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was today sworn in as the fifth Malaysian Prime Minister, taking over from Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who has helmed the nation for 22 years.

Abdullah, 64, took his oath of office before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail at the ceremony in Istana Negara.

Abdullah and Datin Seri Endon Mahmood arrived at 2.40 pm, followed by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali five minutes later.

Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid entered the Throne Room at 3 pm.

The ceremony began with Abdullah taking his oath of office and oath of secrecy.

He then signed the instrument of office before Chief Justice Tan Sri Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim and witnessed by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman.

Abdullah, born in Kepala Batas on Nov 26 1939, is the eldest child of Ahmad Badawi, who was a religious teacher and politician, and Kailan Hassan.

He joined the government service in 1964 as assistant secretary in the Public Service Department (PSD).

Abdullah, who was appointed Deputy Prime Minister on Jan 8 1999, married Endon on Sept 4 1965 and they have a son, Kamaluddin, and a daughter, Nori, and four grandchildren.

Abdullah has served as Foreign Minister (1991-1999), Defence Minister (1986-1987) and Education Minister (1984).

Present at the ceremony were dignitaries including Cabinet Ministers, Menteri Besar, Dewan Negara President Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh, Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tun Dr Mohamed Zahir Ismail, Chief Judge of Malaya Tan Sri Haidar Mohamed Noor and Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak Tan Sri Steve Shim Lip Kiong, Attorney-General Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail, Chief of Defence Forces Jen Tan Sri Zahidi Zainuddin, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai, secretaries-general of the various ministries and heads of department.

Dr Mahathir took his oath of office as the fourth Prime Minister on July 16 1981 before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Ahmad Shah, taking over from Tun Hussein Onn who took his oath of office on Jan 15 1976 before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Yahya Petra, a day after the death of Tun Abdul Razak Hussein.

Tun Abdul Razak took his oath of office as the second Prime Minister on Sept 22 1970 before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah.

Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Putra Al-Haj became the first Prime Minister when the nation attained independence on Aug 31 1957.

-- BERNAMA

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