

22 MAR 2004
Abdullah-Oath
ABDULLAH TAKES OATH OF OFFICE AS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, March 22 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today took his oath of office as Prime Minister before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Putra Jamalullail a day after the Barisan Nasional was returned to power in the 11th general election.

The ceremony, held at the 'Balai Rong Seri' (Throne Room) of Istana Negara here, was telecast live over RTM.

The Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid was present. Abdullah was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Endon Mahmood.

Also present were former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

Abdullah, 64, signed the instruments of office witnessed by Chief Justice Tan Sri Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim.

Federal Territory Mufti Prof Dr Yusuff Hussain recited the 'doa selamat' (prayers) at the ceremony.

The BN secured two-thirds majority on polling day yesterday when the coalition won 196 of the 219 parliamentary seats.

Abdullah retained the Kepala Batas parliamentary seat which he held since 1978. He defeated PAS' Abdul Khalid Rasid, who also challenged him in the 1999 general election, with a majority of 18,122 votes.

Earlier in PUTRAJAYA, Abdullah told a news conference at his official residence that the first cabinet meeting of the newly-elected BN government would be held next Wednesday.

All the cabinet ministers won the seats they contested in the general election.

-- BERNAMA
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