

Emotional recollection

The Star - 11/21/2006

Hishammuddin delivers speech at launch of memorial



REMEMBERING HUSSEIN: Abdullah being briefed by Hishammuddin on the medal that his late father wore at the Tun Hussein Onn Memorial in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With them is Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

By **LEONG SHEN-LI**
sleong@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein became emotional and had to pause for several minutes when talking about his father during the launch of the Tun Hussein Onn Memorial.

He was halfway through his speech yesterday when he suddenly stopped while recalling his father's exemplary character.

This was during the launch of the memorial located at Jalan Dato Onn here where he was delivering his speech as a representative of the Hussein family.

Hishammuddin, who is also Umno Youth chief, was seen fighting back

tears and staring straight ahead.

The VIPs, who included Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and the crowd remained silent.

"It is not easy for me to deliver this speech even though 16 years have passed since my father's death," he said after regaining his composure.

He said this was the first time he was talking about his father in public.

Unlike other members of his family who had visited the memorial before it was officially launched yesterday, Hishammuddin said he had asked for a videotape of all the exhibits instead.

"I needed the privacy of my home to watch it. I think it was emotionally easier for me to see my father's things on the TV screen," he said.

Hishammuddin, who is the youngest of four siblings, said his father would not have expected a memorial to be set up in his honour.

"If he were alive and here today, he would have been very proud," he added.

He paid tribute to his mother Tun Suhailah Mohd Noah for keeping the family intact, as well as other family members for their strength.

"To my children, nephews and nieces, you will get to know how great and special your grandfather was through this memorial," he said.

Abdullah, in his speech, said the one characteristic of Hussein that he remembered vividly was his humility.

"When he decided to appoint me as

parliamentary secretary to the Federal Territory Ministry, he apologised when he told me the news.

"He explained that there were other MPs who were more senior who had to be appointed as deputy ministers. He did not need to apologise for that at all," he said.

Abdullah said Hussein was also a good listener and wanted everybody's view before making a decision.

The memorial is housed in the former Prime Minister's Department building.

There are 16,000 artefacts related to Hussein's life and his role as Malaysia's third Prime Minister.

A book entitled *Tun Hussein: Father of Unity* was also launched at the function.

FEDERATION
YAYASAN
KEPERMIMPINAN
PERDANA