

Only close family members to attend the wedding

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will marry Jeanne Abdullah this Saturday.

The simple wedding will be held at Seri Perdana and attended by close family members only.

Jeanne, 53, received her education at Sekolah Menengah Assunta and has wide experience in administration and hotel management.

She had also worked as supervisor of the deputy prime minister's official residence and the manager of the Seri Perdana Complex.

She has two daughters in their late 20s, Nadiah and Nadene, from her previous marriage.

A jovial Abdullah, 67, said he chose Jeanne to be his wife as they were compatible and she would be able to keep him company.

Despite the marriage, Abdullah said his love for his late wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood would continue to be strong.

"My love for Endon remains as strong as ever. I believe God has created space in our hearts to love many different people."

"You can love your wife, mother, sister, daughter... but we cannot compare the love for your mother with the love for your wife. Jeanne also is a love. God's will created in us a huge capacity for love," he said after opening the Small- and Medium-scale Industries Exhibition (Smidex) 2007 yesterday.

Endon died on Oct 20, 2005 after a long battle with breast cancer. Abdullah has two children, son Kamaluddin and daughter Nori, from his marriage of 40 years with Endon.

The prime minister broke into laughter several times during the press conference, handling the more than 40 questions thrown at him splendidly.

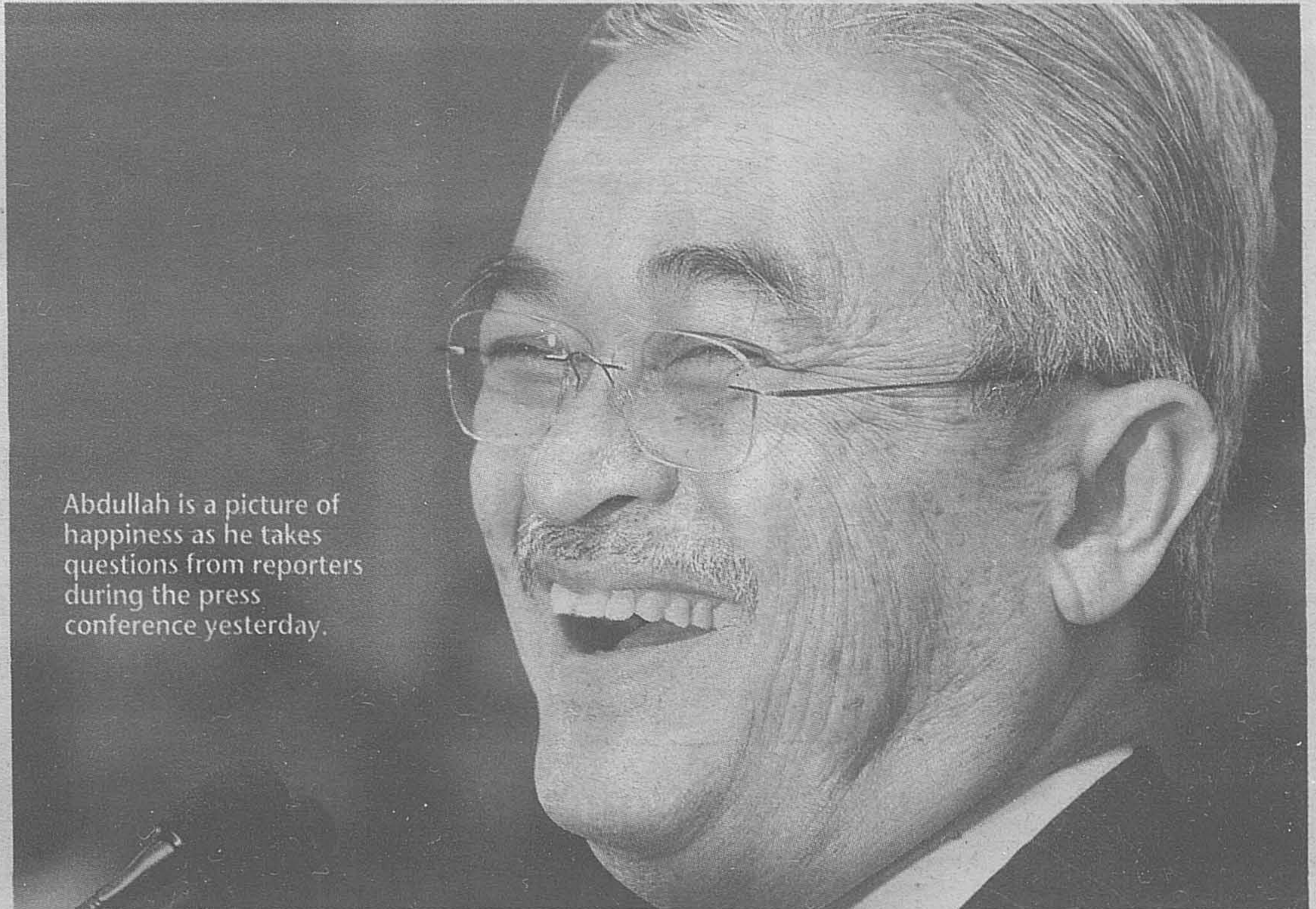
He even quipped that "a happy prime minister can do a lot of great work".

Abdullah said he had known Jeanne for more than 20 years as she was formerly Endon's sister-in-law, but love only blossomed between them about a year ago.

"She (Jeanne) loves children, is friendly and knows how to carry herself well. When I was entertaining guests, she was the one who handled all the details, including seat arrangements and caterers.

"She's a good person and can mix well with people," he said, adding that despite a new person sharing his life, pictures of Endon would remain in his house.

He said he was grateful to Allah that his chosen wife received the



Abdullah is a picture of happiness as he takes questions from reporters during the press conference yesterday.

Excerpts from the prime minister's press conference:

Q: When did you first meet your future wife?

A: I've known her a long time as she is Endon's (late wife's) sister-in-law.

Q: Why did it take you so long to announce because before this, you said it was just a rumour?

A: All the dates mentioned were wrong... that's why I said it was just a rumour. It took some time. I needed to consult my children and had to find the time as I was too busy going here and there.

Q: Do you plan to go on a holiday after your wedding?

A: There's no plans yet... there's an official trip abroad... I will be bringing (Jeanne) along... what's the use of having a companion if you don't bring her along... that too (the press) want to ask?

Q: Have you ordered the wedding ring?

A: Yes... it's already late now.

Q: What do you call her? Darling, sayang? (Laughter from the floor).

A: You will all know what I call her after the marriage.

Q: What is Datuk Seri's hope from the people?

A: I hope they will pray for our happiness because a happier prime minister can do a lot of good work (laughter and applause from the floor).

Q: Will your life be more meaningful?

A: How can it not be meaningful? What kind of question is that? More meaningful... yes, more meaningful. — Bernama

blessings from his children and other close family members.

Asked when he proposed to his wife, Abdullah smiled: "I wish I can remember, but I can't."

He said the wedding would be a simple affair without any *hantaran* (wedding gifts) or *bersanding* ceremony. Only close family members, comprising their children, relatives and in-laws, will be present at the *akad nikah* ceremony.

Asked about his honeymoon plans, Abdullah laughed and said he would need to discuss the matter with his wife-to-be.

He said he did not have any plans to take leave after the wedding as he had numerous overseas working trips that he had

to attend to.

"But during my official working visits all over the country, I'll bring her along to introduce her to the people."

He said he informed the cabinet of his intention to remarry during its weekly meeting before issuing an official statement.

"I hope the rakyat will continue to pray for our well-being," he added.

Earlier, during the Smidex opening ceremony, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz digressed from her official speech to congratulate Abdullah on his marriage on behalf of the delegates present.

While delivering his keynote ad-

dress, Abdullah thanked everyone for their well-wishes.

"For the Malays, when you are getting married, people like to pull your leg, make fun and tease you, especially when you are marrying for the second time, what more if it is the third and fourth time. I won't go beyond two," he said to laughter from the floor.

Meanwhile, Abdullah's son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin said the entire family was happy with the news.

"My brother-in-law, his wife, my wife Nori and I are happy with the news.

"We fully support his decision to remarry. We have known auntie Jeanne for a long time and we are very close."