

PM gets friendly ribbing ahead of big day

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PUTRAJAYA: Like any bridegroom on the eve of his wedding, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was teased about his impending nuptials.

At an Internal Security Ministry function yesterday, he was the target of friendly ribbing by the ministry's secretary-general Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof.

Abdul Aziz, in his speech, congratulated Abdullah and Jeanne Abdullah, whom the premier will marry at a private ceremony at Seri Perdana today.

He read out a Bahasa Malaysia poem he composed for Abdullah, which drew loud cheers and claps from the ministry staff present.

"Mentari menyinar bulan bercahaya/Tanda gembira menerima berita/Pak Lah bahagia kami pun suka/Selamat Sejahtera sepanjang masa.

"Teman berbicara bergurau senda/Wanita dicinta Puan Jeanne Abdullah/Kepada Allah kami berdoa/Bahagia gembira bersama Pak Lah."

Abdullah, who was seated on stage, smiled broadly as Abdul Aziz read the poem.

Later, before making his speech at the function, Abdullah thanked Abdul Aziz for his poem then paused, looking amused as he gathered his thoughts.

"Dah lupalah ... (Can't remember what I'm supposed to speak about). God-willing, our lives will be happy. Thank you for your wishes. I will bring my wife along to future ministry functions and you can meet her then," he said, to applause from the audience.

He said the marriage solemnisation would take place around noon today.

Abdullah, who is also Internal Security Minister, presented excellent service awards to officers from the ministry, police force, National Anti-Drugs Agency, Prisons Department, Civil Defence Department, and the government print-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in a happy mood in Putrajaya yesterday.

ers Percetakan Nasional Berhad.

Also present were Deputy Internal Security Ministers Datuk Johari Baharom and Datuk Fu Ah Kiow, and Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan.

In his speech, Abdullah reminded civil servants to increase their competency and work perfor-

mance, following the government's approval for salary increase for civil servants.

He said manufacturers should increase the supply of goods in the market instead of raising prices as civil servants would now have more money to spend.

Meanwhile, Tun Dr Mahathir

Mohamad extended his congratulations to Abdullah, saying he would pray for the couple's happiness.

"It is good for a man who has lost his wife to re-marry and I congratulate them and will pray that they will have a happy life," he said at his office here yesterday.