

PM weds Jeanne in private do

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Simple ceremony at official residence witnessed by close family members

By MAZWAN NIK ANIS
and SIM LEOI LEOI
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah were married in a simple and private ceremony attended by close family members at his official residence of Seri Perdana yesterday.

Jeanne, 53, became the Prime Minister's wife at around 2.50pm in a ceremony solemnised by acting Putra Mosque Imam Abd Manaf Mat and witnessed by some 50 relatives, including Abdullah's children - Datuk Kamaluddin and Nori and their spouses - and Jeanne's children from her previous marriage, Nadiah and Nadene.

Also at the *akad nikah* ceremony were the Prime Minister's siblings and family members of his late wife, Datin Seri Endon Mahmood.

Seen entering the residence before the ceremony was Yayasan Budi Penyayang chief executive officer Leela Mohd Ali.

Earlier, Jeanne had been escorted by two outriders to Seri Perdana, in a Proton Chancellor car bearing the Prime Minister's favourite license number 13, from her home in Damansara Perdana.

Her arrival at around 2.20pm marked an upswing in the activities surrounding the official residence since morning, when vans bearing flowers and gifts, and catering staff made their way to the gate.

However, reporters staking out at the gate, some of whom had been there from as early as 8am, were disappointed to see that she arrived in a heavily tinted car, making it impossible for them to catch a glimpse of the bride.

The solemnisation ceremony then got under way, the highlight of which was Abdullah slipping a diamond solitaire ring on Jeanne's fourth finger on her left hand. He followed this with a kiss on her cheek, according to those who witnessed the ceremony.

The newlyweds, who were dressed in matching cream-coloured *baju melayu* and *baju kurung*, and their guests later visited Endon's grave in Precinct 20, where Abdullah led special prayers dedicated to his late wife.

When scattering rose petals and scented water, Abdullah remarked to reporters that Muslims planted trees at the grave so that these would "pray for the deceased."

Looking buoyant and happy, with his new wife by his side, he had earlier greeted reporters who had been congregating at the gravesite for an hour, some of whom congratulated him on his marriage.

When approached, Abdullah good-humouredly informed the press that he had only had to "*lafaz nikah sekali sahaja* (proclaim



Newly married: Abdullah walking with Jeanne upon arriving for a visit to Endon's grave at Precinct 20 in Putrajaya yesterday. — AP

his vows only once)".

"The solemnisation of marriage went on smoothly and those who attended it included my children, my siblings and their spouses, those from Kak Endon's side as well as (son-in-law) Khairy's (Jamaluddin) mother and (daughter-in-law) Azrene's mother and my grandchildren.

"They are all my closest family members and, *Alhamdulillah* (thank God), everything went well," he said.

Abdullah also obligingly showed the press the ring that he had presented to Jeanne during the ceremony, holding her left hand. Jeanne, who looked resplendent in a beaded *baju kurung* and scarf, did not speak to the

press but smiled.

Kamaluddin said the family welcomed their "new" mother and that everything had gone smoothly.

"She is our new family member," he said.

Jeanne's daughter Nadene, 27, said her mother had at first seemed calm until she arrived at the *surau* in Seri Perdana.

"It was only then that she felt jittery because she realised what was happening. Everything went well and let's hope for the best," she said.

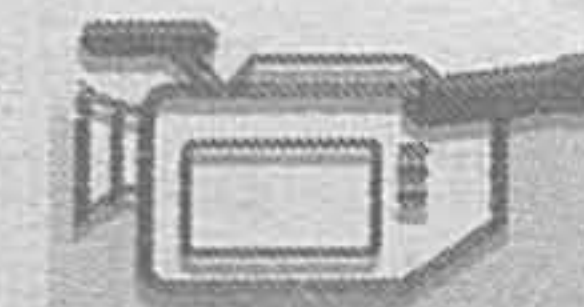
Asked if she was acquainted with her "new" family members, Nadene said they were all already family and "there was nothing new to us."

"We (Nori and I) are close. We are cousins

and our age gap is very close," she said.

The wedding ceremony was over in a matter of minutes, opening a new chapter in Abdullah's life. His wife of 42 years, Endon, died in October 2005 after a long battle with breast cancer.

Jeanne was formerly married to Endon's younger brother Othman, who was also at the ceremony.



Watch the video:
thestar.com.my/mmedia/video

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