

THE STAR

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# Original flag handed over

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## It was in ex-teacher's possession since 1970

**KUALA LUMPUR:** For 37 years, retired teacher Hashim Agus @ Abdul Manaf, 74, has had a valuable possession – the original Umno flag from 1946.

Hashim said his family came into possession of the flag in 1970, when then Ampang state assemblyman, Mahyuddin Zakaria, handed it over for safekeeping to his wife Fatimah Ahmad, 72, who was the Setapak Wanita Umno division secretary.

"I remember he told me, 'Cikgu, this is the original flag from Datuk Onn Jaafar's time. Keep it safe, and hand it over to the relevant authorities.

"I was also a teacher then, and as teachers were not allowed into politics at that time, I kept it with me. I didn't want to lose my job," Fatimah said after her husband handed over the flag to Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim at the Kampung Sungai Mulia Family Day celebrations here yesterday.

Hashim himself served as Gombak Utara

Umno branch secretary from 1960 to 1969.

When asked why they decided to hand over the flag now, Fatimah replied they "could not find the flag for a long time, and had only found it again earlier this year".

"As we were coming for this function, we saw Datuk Seri Dr Rais' name on the banners, and we rushed home to get the flag.

"I am so relieved that we have managed to carry out the responsibility given to us by Mahyuddin," said Fatimah, adding that the flag was very similar to the Umno flag today, but it had the year "1946" on it.

Dr Rais said he would pass the flag on to the Umno headquarters to be framed and to have its historical value estimated.

"The contribution of this village is in the form of this original Umno flag. It is very valuable to us, and we are most grateful for it," he said.

He added that his ministry would give RM20,000 to the village for cultural programmes for the children there.