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**IN MEMORY OF A GREAT PATRIOT**



A hands-on leader, Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein (wearing sun-glasses) joins residents of Kemendor in Malacca in September 1966 to harvest fish from a fish pond under the national rural development plan. — Pictures courtesy of Memorial Tun Abdul Razak

# Razak, illustrious son of the soil



It's a reason to celebrate as Toh Puan Rahah and guests celebrate Tun Abdul Razak Hussein's 53rd birthday at Sri Taman in Kuala Lumpur in March 1975

The former official residence of the country's second prime minister witnessed the reunion once again of family members, relatives and friends who gathered yesterday for a tahlil ceremony, writes **PRABHAKARAN S. NAIR**

**T**UN Abdul Razak Hussein was called to rest some 33 years ago, just 28 days short of his 54th birthday.

His fatal illness was a well-guarded secret, concealed even from his own family members.

He is said to have worked himself to death, even when he knew that time was not on his side.

His dedication to work stands as a tribute to the spirit of the man and the dignity of labour as expressed in the Hadith, "work for this world as if you were to live forever".

Francis Bacon once said that life could be "tiresome and languid" if there were no object to pursue

If Razak showed no signs of fatigue, even when his body was wasting away, the reason must be found in a noble mission that he believed in.

Nothing could be nobler to him than service to the people whom he loved so dearly.

It was his early experience of life in the kampung, more than ideological or philosophical abstractions, that shaped his mission in life.

The memory of suffering was as fresh and verdant as the padi fields and orchards of his childhood days.

Although born into aristocracy, he had toiled in the padi fields

crossed mining bunds, lanes and undergrowth; had bathed in the river; and rode water buffaloes.

"I started my schooling in a school with an attap roof over me and an earthen floor beneath me. I still remember vividly the feel of the mud floor on my shoeless feet, recollected Razak of his early schooling.

He also remembered how proud he was of the one cent pocket money that he sometimes received from his grandfather who took care of the motherless boy.

As the wheels of time turned Razak emerged, in turn, as a brilliant student, keen sportsman, valiant soldier and scholar of law

# Club: Don't react to Kugan SMSes

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club (BNBBC) has urged the Indian community not to react emotionally and to stop forwarding text messages which incite racial hatred over the A. Kugan case.

Its chairman, Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing, said this was important to prevent disunity in Malaysia's multiracial society.

"Let us look at constructive ways to work together to identify the common factors which can change police custody practices.

"It is not about apportioning blame but about highlighting general lessons that will help prevent the likelihood of such deaths in future," he said in a statement here yesterday.

Tiong said there were various areas of concern that needed to be looked at to bring an end to

custodial deaths.

He said the selection process of police personnel must be reviewed to reflect qualifications and capability.

"The instructor and tutor at the police academy must be screened thoroughly before admission and the trainees should not be allowed to graduate automatically.

"Only the qualified ones should be allowed to graduate."

Tiong said police personnel must also be exposed to new methods of interrogation without force, with the help of foreign experts.

"We urge the police to carry out a thorough and impartial investigation into his death. Let us sit together to find a permanent solution to end custodial deaths in Malaysia." — Bernama

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UNLESS WE RESTORE  
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HAVE BEEN IN VAIN.”

*Tun Abdul Razak Hussein*



# Attorney-general to get second report

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The findings of the second post-mortem report on the death of suspected car thief A. Kugan will be handed over to the attorney-general.

Lawyer Gobind Singh Deo said the family of the deceased had agreed that the report, which was expected to be ready by next week, be given to Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail.

"The family does not mind giving a copy of the report to the attorney-general in the interest of justice."

The autopsy was conducted by a forensic pathologist at the request of Kugan's family.

"This is a private post-mortem and the police have no interest because they did not ask for it."

Gobind said the second report could assist the attorney-general, who is also the public prosecutor, to make a "fair assessment" on the cause of Kugan's death.

The second post-mortem, which lasted 10 hours, was carried out at the University Malaya

Medical Centre on Sunday.

Gobind said it took time to prepare the report as samples were sent overseas for analysis.

Kugan, 22, was arrested on Jan 14 after a car chase and was held at the USJ Taipan police station. He collapsed and died in the police station on Jan 20.

The first post-mortem conducted at Serdang Hospital on Jan 21 concluded that Kugan died of accumulated fluid in the lungs.

Kugan's death, which was earlier classified as voluntarily causing hurt to extort a confession, was reclassified as murder by Gani last Friday.

Eleven policemen from the police station have been reassigned to desk duties as investigations are under way.

Gobind, who is Puchong member of parliament, said he would raise the issue of amending the law to allow family members of deceased persons to request for an independent post-mortem in Parliament next month.

## 3 on trial for causing death

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Three youths pleaded not guilty in the Sessions Court here yesterday to causing the death of a Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia student from Somalia on Jan 21.

Theeyalan, 20, and two youths below the age of 18, together with several other youths still at large, were charged with causing grievous bodily harm which might have caused the death of Kadar Abdul Kadir Said.

They were alleged to have committed the offence at the road divider in front of Restoran BRJ, Section 2, Wangsa Maju, between 3am and 3.30am on Jan 21.

Judge Zainal Abidin Kamarudin set bail at RM4,000 in one surety for each of them and fixed three days from May 26 for trial.

The two teens were bailed out by their families, but Theeyalan failed to post bail. — Bernama

There was always quality time spent with the family at Sri Taman, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein's official residence in Kuala Lumpur.

Soon after he returned from his law studies, Razak entered the Pahang civil service, and joined Umno. He turned out to be a superb administrator-politician destined to lead the nation.

It was at this time, in 1951, that Umno became embroiled in a serious crisis, as a result of which many capable and experienced leaders left the party together with its founder, Datuk Onn Jaafar.

Although junior in age, Razak found a niche for himself by supporting the new Umno of inexperienced politicians led by Tunku Abdul Rahman, a friend from his student days in London.

They worked together, with Tunku leading the way with his unparalleled vision, charisma and royal appeal, and Razak providing the support.

The new Umno won the nation its independence, thrusting both leaders into the corridors of power. Razak worked hard as Tunku's deputy for more than a decade before assuming the mantle of power in 1970.

Despite all these accomplishments, Razak always remained at heart a simple kampung boy.

He led a simple life of exemplary service that defined the true measure of one's love for the nation.

"The true measure of a nation is not found in such cold facts as its size, wealth or population but in the warmth of the service which its citizens give of their own free will to their fellow men," he once said.

He would walk through mud and rain for days on end, intent on modernising farming methods, introducing water and electricity, and building roads, schools, clinics and community centres for the villages.

Needless to say, his simplicity and life of selfless service endeared him to all and sundry.

Razak was a man of action who avoided long-winded arguments and

petty bickering. He had no flair for words, but he offered the people a message of hope, and more importantly, he delivered.

A man of such nature could not possibly be a demagogue. "We are tired of silly speeches of those who, like political parasites, are perpetually picking at the corpse of colonialism," said Razak at the height of the Confrontation with Indonesia.

If not for leaders like him, the country might have fallen into the hands of those whom Tun Mohamed Suffian Hashim described as "starry-eyed visionaries, strong on theory and oratory, but weak in administrative ability and common sense, as indeed happened in Ghana and several other countries".

Besides work ethic and simplicity, Razak was also known for his integrity.

It is not widely known that during the 1959 election campaign, Razak refused to use the public address system belonging to the Information Department.

Following electoral victory, Razak willingly made way for Tunku's return as prime minister. He had been appointed acting prime minister while Tunku concentrated on winning support for the Alliance.

His disregard for power was put once again to the test in the aftermath of the 1969 riots when Razak was entrusted with absolute power.

He did not relish the power at his disposal. He accepted his responsibilities as "unpleasant business", arguing that "unless we restore power where it properly belongs, to the people through Parliament, all the struggle for independence, the struggle against communism, all that will have been in vain".

True to his conscience, when times were propitious, Razak restored parliamentary democracy, much against the advice of party members.

His parsimony with regard to public funds was legendary. After becoming prime minister, he refused to move out of Sri Taman, the official residence he had occupied as deputy prime minister since 1965.

Nor did he not allow his wife to change the curtains and re-upholster the furniture. His eldest son, (Datuk Seri) Najib, remembered how disappointed the children were when their father abandoned the plan to build a swimming pool at their home.

To Razak, the estimated cost of RM60,000 could be better spent on building three rural health clinics.

Razak struck a chord with Tun Tan Siew Sin, the finance minister, for his high standards of financial integrity. Both of them abhorred profligacy, and found displays of extravagance and lavish lifestyle distasteful.

When he had to make his last journey, Razak was careful not to incur unnecessary expense for the government; as a result his wife was not to accompany him on that journey.

The candle finally burnt itself out on Jan 14, 1976, and the baton was passed on to Tun Hussein Onn, his brother-in-law, who moved into Sri Taman by the end of the year.

Incidentally, Hussein was born in the same year as Razak and died in the same year as Tunku, the first prime minister.

The Sri Taman was subsequently offered to the National Archives of Malaysia to be used as a memorial to honour and perpetuate the legacy of Razak.

Nestled in the midst of luscious greenery, the memorial stands today as a reminder of the need to restore to this land the core values of simplicity, sacrifice, hard work and integrity exemplified in the life of this illustrious son of the soil.

■ The writer is an archivist with the National Archives