

# King of two generations

**METAMORPHOSIS OF COUNTRY:** Tuanku Abdul Halim presided over first transfer of power of the civilian government

**T**UANKU Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah and Tuanku Hajah Haminah returned to Kedah after completing a five-year reign as the 14th Yang di-Pertuan Agong and Raja Permaisuri Agong.

The special aircraft carrying the royal couple took off from KLIA at 11am on Monday, escorted by three Sukhoi SU-30MKM fighter jets.

From the runway, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who appeared sad, waved at the king. For the past five years, the relationship between the two was often described as between "*ayahanda and anakanda*".

The royal send-off was simple but ceremonial. It accentuated an im-

portant but often overlooked facet of the Malaysian life as the yellow regalia decorated the Malaysian morning. At this moment, it was perceptible to many who love this land that His Majesty symbolises protection, culture and tradition that is truly unique to this country.

As the 27th Sultan of Kedah, he served as the 5th and 14th Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia.

He was the first person to hold the position twice, as well as the oldest ruler elected to the office on his second tenure. A king who spanned two generations; it is not too much to conclude that His Majesty has seen and stayed true to the metamorphosis of Malaysia from the critical 1970s to the current day.

Sultan Abdul Halim received his early education at Alor Merah and Titi Gajah Malay Schools. He continued his studies at the Sultan Abdul Hamid College in Alor Star between 1946 and 1948 and attended



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Wadham College, Oxford in early 1952 where he obtained a Diploma in Social Science and Public Administration. After completing his studies, he returned to Kedah to join the state's administrative service, including the Alor Star district office and the State Treasury. His background in the public service rendered a sense of responsibility where he went to the ground often and brought the palace closer to the people.

Following the demise of Sultan Sir Badlishah, he ascended to the throne of Kedah on July 15, 1958 at age 35, and was installed as the Sultan of Kedah on Feb 20, 1959. He served as deputy Yang di-Pertuan Agong from Sept 21, 1965 for five years. Then he was elected as the 5th Yang di-Pertuan Agong and served his term in office from Sept 21, 1970 to Sept 20, 1975.

The nation was experiencing much political uncertainty at this point in time. Following a racial riot, Parliament was suspended and a state of emergency was declared while the National Operations Council (NOC/MAGERAN, Majlis Gerakan Negara) was established to govern

the nation between 1969 and 1971, which resulted in the creation of several important policies to move Malaysia forward; especially the New Economic Policy, which aimed to eradicate poverty and restructure society. Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, the current prime minister's father, was the director of the NOC.

His Majesty also presided over the first transfer of power of the civilian government when his uncle, Malaysia's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, resigned in favour of his deputy, Razak. Interestingly, under strict Malay royal protocol, Tunku Abdul Rahman felt obliged not to serve under a nephew. He did, however, agree to stay on as prime minister for one day during Tuanku Abdul Halim's reign.

The sultan was elected deputy Yang di-Pertuan Agong for the second time to serve a five-year term in 2006 and became the third person to have been elected twice to this office. After his deputy kingship, he was elected to serve a second term as the 14th Yang di-Pertuan Agong on Dec 13, 2011, succeeding Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin of Terengganu whose term ended on Dec 12, 2011.

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Sultan Abdul Halim historically became the first person to reign through the country's highest post twice. On the coronation day held at Istana Negara on April 11, 2012, he became the oldest Malay ruler to be crowned king at 84 years and 15 days old, surpassing the previous record holder, Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz of Selangor.

Coming full circle, he returned as Yang di-Pertuan Agong under the premiership of Razak's son, Najib.

As a king of two generations who served with father and son, Sultan Abdul Halim commented that progress had indeed been achieved by Malaysia compared with his first reign, in that the country has reached an age of maturity.

His Majesty is known as a distinguished king who cares for his religion and his subjects. He once said: "In a constitutional monarchy, the king is the arbitrator, the balancing power so that there will be political stability and public order."

During working visits, His Majesty often stressed the importance of unity, and, especially for Muslims, to stay true to the teachings of Islam. During his reign as the sultan of Kedah, despite his long reign and post-independence era, he became accustomed to visiting the grassroots in efforts to bridge the gap between the people and the palace. His humble demeanour made him a much loved and respected monarch among his subjects, and in Kedah in particular.

His Majesty is succeeded by the Sultan of Kelantan, Sultan Muhammad V, who ascended the throne as the 15th Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

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**Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah and Tuanku Hajah Haminalah** about to leave for Kedah on a special aircraft at KLIA. **His Majesty symbolises protection, culture and tradition** that is truly unique to this country.  
Bernama pic

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