

29/04/2000

Demise of a respected Islamic leader, scholar

FORMER Pas president Yusof Rawa, who died in Penang yesterday morning, was a much respected Islamic leader and scholar.

He took over the party's helm in October 1983 during troubled times when the then president, the late Datuk Asri Muda, quit the party along with several senior officials.

Yusof was also once known as a "giant-killer" among staunch Pas supporters for defeating Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the 1969 general election.

Although he won with only 989 vote majority, Yusof was hailed for his triumph in the Kota Setar Selatan parliamentary constituency.

A well-known businessman in Penang, Yusof joined Pas in 1951 and as he went up the rank-and-file, was appointed Deputy Primary Industries Minister in 1974. Pas was a component party of the Barisan Nasional then.

Educated at the Penang Free School, Yusof was sent to Mecca by his father after he finished his Junior Cambridge examination.

He spent 10 years in the Middle East and obtained a diploma in Islamic studies from the religious institution Mahad Al-Falah before returning home in 1941.

Yusof was ambassador to Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan between 1975 and 1978.

His real name is Yusof Abdullah, but friends decided to call him Yusof Rawa to distinguish him from the many Yusofs.

Rawa is the name of a clan in north Sumatra, Indonesia, where Yusof's ancestors originated from.

Acting as spokesman for the family, Yusof's fourth child, Ahmad Nazrien, 48, said his father was last admitted to a private hospital here three weeks ago and was discharged four days ago.

Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor said Yusof had sacrificed and contributed for Islam and the party even after stepping down as president 12 years ago. Yusof held the post for five years before passing it down to Fadzil in 1988.

Hundreds of people, mostly Pas members, paid their last respects at Yusof's home in Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, in Glugor, Penang.

Others included State Assemblymen for Permatang Pasir and Penanti Mohd Hamdan Abdul Rahman and Abdul Rahman Kadir respectively and MP for Sik Datuk Dr Shahnnon Ahmad.

(END)