

25/11/2001

King's death focus of all newspapers

Balan Moses

MALAYSIA lost a well-loved King with the passing of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah on Wednesday after a prolonged illness.

The 11th King, a friend of the media, endeared himself to people from all walks of life with his kindness, quick smile and gentle manner. He will always be remembered for his close rapport with the people and the Government through his constructive suggestions and incisive comments.

The vernacular Press carried news of the Ruler's passing on their front-pages on Thursday with the appropriate black border.

The Berita Harian, Utusan Malaysia, Sin Chew Jit Poh, China Press, Tamil Nesan and Malaysia Nanban in their Thursday edition also devoted numerous pages to pictures of the late King over the years.

It was suitable coverage for a Ruler whose pictures had graced the pages of most vernacular dailies over the past 41 years of rule as the 8th Sultan of Selangor and more recently as Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

The Berita Harian, carrying a picture of the King in royal attire on page one, narrated the sequence of events beginning from the Ruler's worsening heart condition after he was admitted to the Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore last month to his demise.

Immediately below the lead story was a report stating that the next Yang di-Pertuan Agong would be selected in a month's time at a meeting of the Malay Rulers.

The Berita Harian gave prominence to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's comments in its lead story on page two where the Prime Minister expressed grief over the King's passing.

The newspaper, in its editorial, said the people were left with only sweet memories of the late King who did a lot to develop the country and Selangor.

It stated that the Ruler had always reminded the people to respect the system of parliamentary democracy for continued national stability and development.

The Utusan Malaysia, in also extending comprehensive coverage to the Ruler's passing, quoted Dr Mahathir in its page two lead article as saying that the late Ruler was the most active King in the nation's history.

It also featured the media-friendly nature of the King in its lead article on page three. The King, it stated, had always spoken freely to the media as he had to the people.

It referred to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's 20-minute interview with Bernama, RTM and TV3 at the Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore on Nov 10 where the late King had thanked the rakyat for praying for his good health.

The Sin Chew Jit Poh and China Press also gave extensive coverage to the King's passing with stories earlier in the week noting his deteriorating condition.

Like other Chinese-language newspapers, they quoted Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng in their Wednesday edition as saying that a team of 27 specialists representing various medical disciplines were attending to the Ruler.

So also the Tamil Nesan and Malaysia Nanban which ran stories on the late Ruler's health the same day quoting Istana Negara officials as stating that the King was in critical condition.

The Malaysia Nanban headlined the story "Let us all pray for His

Majesty's health" with a short accompanying story that the King was on a life support system.

All vernacular newspapers also recorded on Friday the fact that the Regent of Selangor, Tengku Idris Shah, had been proclaimed the ninth Sultan of Selangor with the title Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah.

The "People's King" has passed on after an outstanding reign. The nation will always remember him.