

21 NOV 2001

Agong-Media

SULTAN SALAHUDDIN - A MEDIA-FRIENDLY RULER

By: Tham Choy Lin

SINGAPORE, Nov 21 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, who died in Kuala Lumpur today at the age of 75, will be remembered by Malaysian journalists as a media-friendly monarch.

In his 41-year reign as the Sultan of Selangor, he had frequently set aside protocol to talk with the people and media personnel.

At times, his accessibility to the media caught journalists covering his official functions by surprise as he readily answered questions from reporters on various issues, especially those concerning Selangor.

The last time His Majesty met with Malaysian journalists was on Nov 10 at the Mount Elizabeth Hospital here after receiving a visit from Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The King looked cheerful then and said he would be returning to Malaysia on Nov 24 after undergoing treatment for almost two months here.

At the 20-minute meeting which he granted to journalists from Bernama, RTM and TV3, the King again thanked the people for praying for his recovery.

The King also took the opportunity to wish the Malaysian Hindu community "Happy Deepavali".

The King said his health had improved a bit to enable him to return home.

The meeting was the second the King granted to Malaysian journalists since he came to Singapore on Sept 19.

At the end of the interview, the King thanked the journalists and asked Istana Negara officials to make sure that they were served with coffee.

On other occasions, the King allowed a Bernama photographer to take photographs when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Abdullah and Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong visited him.

He was also visited by Singapore President S.R.Nathan and the Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

His Majesty also received many bouquets of flowers and hundreds of greeting cards from Malaysians working in Singapore.

His condition took a turn for the worse and he was flown back to Kuala Lumpur on Nov 18 and admitted to the Gleneagles Intan Medical Centre where he died.

-- BERNAMA

TCL AHH YBY