

'He lived and died for the people'

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Bede Hong

Two months shy of Malaysia's golden anniversary, Umno decides to honour the late Tun Abdul Razak in a lavish seminar at the Sime Darby convention centre in Kuala Lumpur today.

The country's second prime minister was described as a "loyal man" who did not turn dictator when he could.

His son, and present deputy prime minister, Najib Abdul Razak, said his father was the inspiration to public service.

"He is the main source of my motivation to work hard for the people," he told an audience of 200 Umno members and academicians.

"As stationery was hard to come by then, he used to learn mathematics by doing the problems on the sand," added the deputy premier, who described his father as a hard worker who performed well academically.

Razak, who died in 1976 after serving as prime minister for two terms, attended the Kuala Kangsar Malay College and Raffles College in Singapore. He later completed his law degree in Lincon's Inn in London.

Najib quoted former economic planning unit director Thong Yaw Hong as saying that his father had "lived and died for the people."

He also quoted Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as saying to him, "You are his biological son but I'm his political son."

Not power crazy

"Tun could have continued running (Majlis Gerakan Negara) Mageran for as long as he wished. But he was not power crazy," said Najib.

After the 1969 riots, Razak had chaired the National Operations Council and the country's de-facto administrative body (Mageran). The country was in a state of emergency until 1971.

"There are many examples around the world where there are leaders whose total power is unquestioned, where leaders try to hold on to that power.

"However, Tun regarded the Mageran directorship as a heavy responsibility. He believed in the principles of democracy and did not want to be regarded as a dictator. That is why Tun returned administration of the country to the people and parliamentary democracy," said Najib.

"Although Tun was regarded as someone who could take over the leadership from Tunku (Abdul Rahman) earlier, on the urging of some parties, he remained a loyal person.

"He said, 'I would never allow myself to do this. This is not the Malay way. If we are the second

man, we have to play our role as the second man," he said.

Ill intentions

Najib also listed out the social institutions and agencies his father had created: Felda, Petronas, Mara, Tabung Haji, Mida, MIDF, MISC, Fama, Pernas, UDA, LPN, LPP, Felcra, Risda, Bank Bumiputera, Bank Pertanian, UKM, ITM, Bernama, the Islamic Centre, the Bumiputera Economic Congress and the state development body.

Razak also created the Rukun Negara which spells out the social contract for Malaysians, which includes the protection of the special rights of the Malays.

He also helped draft the New Economic Policy (NEP), a race-based affirmative action that sought to raise rural Malays out of poverty.

Also present at the seminar were Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussein and his deputy Khairy Jamaluddin.

In his speech, Khairy attacked the detractors of Barisan Nasional (BN).

"Now there are some people in society that are too clever, they think BN is not relevant anymore because it was created by ethnic-based political parties. Some of them aspire to distort history, to review dark parts of history, that we try to forget.

"They don't have any basis for their allegations and they have ill intentions. They want to point fingers and put responsibilities on innocent parties," he said.

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