

SERI Paduka Baginda Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin is the 17th Sultan of Terengganu.

On Nov 3, 2006, Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin was elected by the Conference of Rulers to succeed Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail (the Raja of Perlis) as the 13th Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia. His five-year term, which started on Dec 13, 2006, follows a rotation system.

Malaysia has nine Sultanates, and every five years, the Sultans take turns to become the Yang di-Pertuan Agong – the Paramount Ruler. Malaysia is the only country in the world whose Paramount Ruler is elected in this manner.

The power to elect and appoint the new King is vested in the members of the Conference of Rulers, who are the Raja of Perlis, the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan, and the Sultans of Perak, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Selangor and Johor. No State ruler can serve a second term as King except when his turn comes up next in the rotation.

The new Yang di-Pertuan Agong will find his new role challenging but inspiring. While he holds office, he is not permitted to carry out his functions as a Sultan of his state, with the exception of being the head of Islam. He is to appoint a regent and cannot receive any allowances from his state while he is in office, and he isn't allowed to

# The 13th King

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be active in any businesses.

Under Article 32 of the Federal Constitution, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong takes precedence over all persons in the Federation. He serves as a symbol of democratic rule and national solidarity, and is the protector of the Islamic faith in the country. He is able to seek the Cabinet's advice in his obligations as the monarch, and acts upon the advice of the Cabinet or an appointed minister of the Cabinet.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong wields power and influence among his people and country. It is within his power to pardon prisoners on death row, and when there is an emergency or crisis, it is to him that the Government and the people will turn.

As head of state, Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin can look forward to conferring awards and honours on citizens and non-citizens, which is traditionally done during His Majesty's official birthday. His Majesty

also appoints diplomats to serve in missions abroad, and grants them an audience before their overseas stint.

The round of official duties both

Majesties cover is formal, and these include presiding at the opening and closing of Parliament; gracing the National Day celebrations and bestowing awards to deserving individuals. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong will also be involved in charities, and extend royal patronage to organisations that need His Majesty's support. He is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and here, Tuanku Mizan's Zainal Abidin military education is definitely an advantage.

Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin also has administrative experience: he was appointed Assistant Land Levy Collector and worked for about a year at the District Land Office in Kuala Terengganu before leaving to attend a military course in Britain. He was also a State Administrative



Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin

Officer at the State Economic Planning Unit in Wisma Darul Iman, Kuala Terengganu, and has served as Assistant District Land Officer at the Kuala Terengganu District Land Office.

Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin is married to Sultanah Nur Zahirah and they have two sons and two daughters. Tengku Nadhirah Zaharah was born on Dec 18, 1996, and Tengku Muhammad Ismail was born on March 1, 1998. The other two children are Tengku Muhammad Mua'az, aged six, and Tengku Fatimatuz Zahra', four.

A Ruler concerned about the welfare of his subjects, Sultan Mizan makes the effort to perform Friday prayers at all the mosques in Terengganu. His Majesty also continues his late father, Sultan Mahmud Al-Muktafi Billah Shah's practice of giving alms to orphans and the poor every Friday.

In short, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong is an ambassador of the country. How he rules and carries himself will colour the societal landscape of the country during the five years of his reign.

At the end of the day, foremost on His Majesty's mind is the fact that the nation's needs are most important, and he will do his utmost to meet the requirements and challenges asked of him. The King is a leader of a country, with great responsibilities. - Article issued by Jabatan Marisan

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