

Tun Abdul Razak Hussein (1970-76)

Father of Development

The Sun - 30/7/2007



THE most significant components that make Malaysia what it is today was introduced during the tenure of the second prime minister.

In spite of a brief tenure, many attributes of Malaysia - social, political and economical - were Tun Abdul Razak Hussein's handiwork, an achievement emulated only by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Given the alias of *Bapa Pembangunan* (Father of Development), Razak charted the development of the nation physically, politically and socially - the after-effects of which are felt and witnessed to this day.

Townships spruced up during his time, including Petaling Jaya, the country's first satellite town.

The country embarked on an

"agriculture revolution", which saw it becoming the world's largest producer of rubber.

The Rubber Industry Smallholders' Development Authority (Risda) was established for this purpose, while another natural resource - oil - was exploited to the maximum, with the setting up of Petroliaam Nasional Berhad (Petronas) - which is today a Forbes-listed entity.

The electronics industry also saw tremendous growth, with Malaysia becoming a main manufacturer of electronic components.

Razak's development policy that has come to be known as the Red Book is the foundation on which the nation was built.

The New Economic Policy (NEP), introduced in 1971, has helped many bumiputras escape a life of poverty - although it is today criticised for

creating loopholes that allow the policy's principles and spirit to be hijacked by the rich to become even richer.

The NEP was Razak's way to eradicate racial distrust that came to a boil during the May 13, 1969 racial riots - an incident which accelerated Razak's journey to the top.

The tragic event resulted in the suspension of the Constitution and the birth of the National Consultative Council, which Razak headed.

His political legacy includes the Barisan Nasional, which was founded in 1974 to replace the Alliance.

It was also Razak's simple yet demanding conditions for a clean and efficient administration that set the standards for the civil service which even today, the civil service struggles to achieve.

He was a politician and civil servant who understood well the need to be circumspect. Upon discovering that it would cost RM30,000 to build a swimming pool at his official residence, he had to disappoint his children.

"What would people say?" he reasoned.

His eldest son, Datuk Seri Najib, is today deputy prime minister.

As director of operations of the National Operations Council (NOC) that ran the country after the May 13 riots until 1971, and because he abolished local council elections in the 1970s, Razak was often perceived as being authoritarian.

But this, writes Datuk P.G. Lim is far from the truth. She was one of two women appointed to the National Consultative Council under the NOC.

"Tun Razak assured members that they had the right to say what they thought. The government would not disregard their views," Lim wrote in an essay published in *Tun Abdul Razak, A Personal Portrait*.

"He appealed to the people to re-dedicate themselves to certain ideals which would transcend race, religion, culture, class and political affiliations."

Under Tun Abdul Razak's premiership:

- » Barisan Nasional formed to replace the Alliance
- » The New Economic Policy (NEP) launched
- » Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)



established

- » Second Malaysia Plan launched
- » Malaysia Airlines System established
- » First Maktab Rendah Sains Mara established in Seremban
- » Urban Development Authority set up
- » Green Book launched to revolutionalise the agriculture sector
- » Risa established
- » Petronas established
- » Bank Pembangunan formed
- » Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia or Sirim formed
- » Local government elections abolished.

"I am a dictator. I rule by decree. It's an unpleasant business and it's best to quickly get it over and done with. Unless we restore power to where it properly belongs, to the people through Parliament, all the struggle for independence, the struggle against communism, all that will have been in vain."

Upon taking stewardship of the National Operations Council which took over governing the country from Parliament following the May 13 riots.

— As quoted by Tan Sri Lee Siew Yee in *Tun Abdul Razak, A Personal Portrait*

"Dismissal is not the penalty for inefficiency, as it is in the private sector."

"At what point, in dollars and cents, does corruption lose its temptation? How much should we give in order to buy honesty?"

Razak on the debate on civil service pay vis-a-vis that offered by the private sector. — As quoted by Tan Sri Lee Siew Yee in *Tun Abdul Razak, A Personal Portrait*

"If we are not dominant numerically, how can we protect the minorities?"

Razak on the power of the Malay majority. — As quoted by Datuk Harris Salleh in *Tun Abdul Razak, A Personal Portrait*