

King: Let Anwar be my last PM

Changes in administration and political crisis weighed heavily on Sultan Abdullah

PETALING JAYA: Looking back on his reign which has seen four prime ministers with four different Cabinets, the King has expressed his hope that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim would be his “last Prime Minister”.

Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, who is expected to complete his tenure on Jan 31 next year, said the political crisis could have been avoided if Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad didn't resign as prime minister in 2020.

“I have no intention of interfering with national politics, let alone manoeuvring through the political landscape.

“If the episodes leading to the resignation of the seventh prime minister did not happen, I believe that the political crisis that lasted till the 15th General Election (GE15) could have been avoided.

“More importantly, the political crisis that plagued the country for nearly four years would have been avoided if elected representatives and politicians had set aside their differences and united for the people and country we love,” he said in his speech officiating the 15th Parliament yesterday.

Sultan Abdullah said he was speaking from his heart and that he had experienced many unforgettable and challenging episodes since he ascended to the throne as the 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong on Jan



In session: Sultan Abdullah presenting Anwar with the Royal Decree at the opening of the 15th Parliament. - Bernama

31, 2019.

“Etched in the nation's history, I'm the only King who reigned with four prime ministers and four different Cabinets,” said the King.

Sultan Abdullah then recounted the political events that ensued after Dr Mahathir quit as the seventh prime minister on Feb 24, **2020.**

“In line with the discretionary powers conferred to the King under the Federal Constitution, I found that Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had

secured the majority support to be appointed the eighth prime minister on March 1, 2020,” he said.

The King said he assumed the political storm had been weathered, but instead, Muhyiddin eventually resigned on Aug 16, 2021.

“This meant that I was once again forced to bear the heavy burden of choosing and appointing a new prime minister,” he added.

As the King was sharing his experience with the Dewan Rakyat, Muhyiddin could be seen looking

down while another former premier, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, was seen smiling.

Sultan Abdullah said he subsequently appointed Ismail Sabri, whom he earlier thanked for his contributions, as the ninth prime minister on Aug 21, 2021, after the Bera MP garnered the majority support in Parliament.

Ismail Sabri, however, had requested his consent soon after that to dissolve Parliament on Oct 10, to pave the way for GE15.

“After GE15 concluded, for the first time in Malaysia's democratic history, the country was faced with a hung parliament.

“Once again, I took on the heavy task of choosing and appointing another prime minister,” said the King.

As no party had a clear majority to form the government after GE15 last year, Sultan Abdullah said he had given ample room for elected MPs to work together and come to a consensus based on the principles of unity for the future of the country.

Based on the Federal Constitution, on Nov 24 last year, the King consented to the appointment of Anwar as the 10th Prime Minister of Malaysia.

“I hope that the 10th Prime Minister will be the last for me, before I return to Pahang Darul Makmur,” said Sultan Abdullah,

who was referring to the end of his term as King.

He said Malaysia, as a nation with 66 years of independence, had accepted diversity as its main strength.

“If diversity, plurality and political uncertainty continue to be a cause of conflict and disunity, I'm concerned that peace and desired development will not last forever,” he added.

Sultan Abdullah said his reign as the 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong will come to an end on Jan 30 next year.

“This means that this will be the last time that I will be attending the opening ceremony of Parliament and decree in this House,” he said.

He then paid tribute to the unwavering loyalty of the civil service, the army, the police, health workers and all government agencies.

He also advised elected representatives to uphold the dignity and sanctity of Parliament.

“Serve sincerely as elected representatives who always place the interest of the people and the future of the country in your hearts,” said the King.

The second session of the 15th Parliament, which began yesterday, will sit until March 30.