

Each PM has his own style

Malaysia has had 10 prime ministers from 15 general elections. There are some characteristics we can appreciate in our prime ministers.

The first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj, was from Kedah royalty, holding the position from 1957 to when he stepped down.

He was succeeded by Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, a Pahang aristocrat.

Razak was PM from 1970 to 1976, when he died. Tunku was the first chairman of the Alliance Party, while Razak was the first chairman of Barisan Nasional (BN).

Tunku has a unique position in history.

He was the first, and only, chief minister of Malaya (in 1955), then became the first, and only, prime minister of Malaya in 1957, and then became the first prime minister of Malaysia when it was formed in 1963.

Four prime ministers had a legal background: Tunku, Razak, Tun Hussein Onn and Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.



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Four prime ministers were foreign-educated: Tunku, Razak, Hussein and Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

All the prime ministers had an education in the arts, except for Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who had a medical background.

Four prime ministers graduated from Universiti Malaya and two from Lincoln's Inn.

Najib was the sixth prime minister, while his father, Razak, was the second prime minister. Both represented Pekan in Pahang.

The prime minister who served the longest was Dr Mahathir, who served for 22 years and three months, while Ismail Sabri served the shortest: 14 months.

Dr Mahathir was the only PM whose first term was with BN and the second term with Pakatan Harapan (PH).

All the prime ministers till Najib were from Umno.

Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin led a Perikatan Nasional (PN) government, Ismail Sabri came from his party, and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim became the second prime minister to head a government that included PH.

Anwar is the first prime minister from PKR.

Umno produced six prime minister, but Bersatu produced two — Dr Mahathir and Muhyiddin— from 2018 to 2021.

Ismail Sabri continued as prime minister from Umno, but he was not the chairman of BN.

Umno, which ruled for 61 years, became part of the government in 2020 and 2022.

The oldest prime minister was Dr Mahathir, sworn in at 93 when he held the post for the second time.

The oldest prime minister to assume office for the first time is Anwar at 75. The youngest was Razak, who was 48.

Razak was the only prime minister who died in office. Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi became the first prime minister to (re)marry in office after the death of his wife.

All the other prime ministers stepped down to make way for a successor from the same party, except for Dr Mahathir in his second term, who stepped down and was replaced by Muhyiddin from another coalition, PN.

Likewise, Najib stepped down because his party lost the election.

All prime ministers had one deputy prime minister, except for Ismail Sabri, who had no deputy, and Anwar, who has two deputy prime ministers from two parties.

All the deputy prime ministers became prime ministers, except for Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, because the BN-led government fell to PH, and Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail when the PKR-PH government collapsed.

Three prime ministers came from Pahang, and two each from Penang, Johor and Kedah.

Whatever is said of our prime ministers, one thing is clear: all held early positions in Umno.

Except for Ismail Sabri, all the prime ministers were once a deputy president of Umno.

As presidents of Umno, all the prime ministers led their coalitions in election campaigns, except Muhyiddin and Ismail Sabri.

Muhyiddin resigned as prime minister before the 15th General Election, while Ismail Sabri was not chairman of BN and hence was unable to lead the coalition.

All had *bapa*-styled titles given to them.

Tunku was recognised as Bapa Kemerdekaan, Razak as Bapa Pembangunan, Hussein Onn as Bapa Perpaduan and Dr Mahathir as Bapa Pemodenan.

Abdullah ended it by calling himself Pak Lah.

None of the other PMs had a *bapa* title. But Muhyiddin carved his own *abah* title.

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