

'A fine leader who breathed unity'

Anwar: Tunku Abdul Rahman was a visionary who ensured no one was left behind

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KUALA LUMPUR: The late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al Haj was a visionary leader who captured the hearts of all races, as his message of unity in diversity was consistent throughout his era, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said that although Tunku entrenched the pillars that may have been seen as controversial by some when he founded the nation, Tunku ensured all the other races and religions were also included and that no one was left behind.

"One cannot capture such a great statesman with such a great vision to create an independent Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak," he said at an event held in conjunction with the 122nd birth anniversary of the Malaysian first Prime Minister at the Tunku Abdul Rahman Memorial here yesterday.

He said that although in his younger days, he might not have agreed with Tunku on some issues, he could never deny Tunku's personality had won the hearts of all races in this country.

"He was consistent as he spoke of the unity of the country, the harmony of all races and cultures.

"He was also the one who had placed the pillars of the country - Bahasa Malaysia as the official language, Islam as the official religion, the rights of the Malays and the sovereignty of the Malay Rulers.

"He had upheld these but he ensured all



In memory of a true statesman: Anwar being presented the photo of Tunku and his wife taken in Tokyo in 1970, by Tunku's granddaughter Datin Seri Sharifah Menyalara during the event held in conjunction with the 122nd birth anniversary of Tunku Abdul Rahman in Kuala Lumpur. Also present is Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang. — Bernama

races and religions were included as the interests of the country overruled everything else. The spirit of unity raised Malaysia as a united country today," he added.

At the event, Anwar was presented a memento of a photograph of Tunku and his wife taken in Tokyo by Tunku's granddaughter Datin Seri Sharifah Menyalara Hussein, who also spoke at the event.

Sharifah Menyalara said to her, her grandfather, whom she fondly called Tok Tam, was a man who breathed "unity".

"Tok Tam was a steadfast champion of unity. He didn't just talk about unity, he

lived it.

"What truly brought Tunku joy wasn't the grandeur of leadership, but the simple sound of children laughing and playing. They weren't just his grandchildren, but the children of his staff from all backgrounds.

"One visitor, seeing the diversity of children playing in the compound, asked who they were and Tok Tam, with his usual warmth and humour, simply smiled and replied 'They are all my cucu'," she recalled.

National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang said the Tunku Abdul Rahman Memorial was set up to honour the contri-

butions and services of the leader, as a distinguished statesman and Father of Independence.

He said the Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation was established in 1966 to provide financial assistance to students who wish to pursue higher education.

The foundation, which has helped 9,500 students, would continue to focus on providing educational assistance through the Tunku Abdul Rahman Scholarships, as well as implementing programmes such as Closing The Gap and Future Ready to improve the employability of B40 graduates, he added.