

Former teacher serenades PM on harmonica

SHAH ALAM, Sun. — It was a walk down memory lane for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today when he met Ng Soo Chye, 73, — his English teacher when he was in Form One.

Ng had taught the Prime Minister for two years in the 1950s at the Bukit Mertajam High School.

“This is truly a historic moment for me,” said a jubilant Ng when asked how he felt about meeting Abdullah after all these years.

“I had never thought that one of my students would one day become the Prime Minister of this country,” he said.

The special teacher-student meeting was organised as part of the national-level Teachers’ Day celebration which Abdullah launched at the Malawati Stadium here.

The theme for this year’s celebration was “Quality Teachers — Catalysts of Excellence” (Guru Berkualiti Pemangkin Kegemilangan).

Ng was presented with a bouquet and later to the delight of Abdullah and the crowd, played the song *Tanah Pusaka* on his harmonica in dedication to the Prime Minister.

Recalling Abdullah’s student days, Ng said the Prime Minister displayed fine leadership qualities to the admiration of the school management. “I’ll continue to pray for him,” he said.

Abdullah later presented awards to the winners of this year’s Tokoh Guru and a special award “Tokoh Kepimpinan Pendidikan”.

The special award was presented to former Education director-general Tan Sri Murad Mohd Noor.

Murad, 74, hails from Seberang Perai in Penang and was the Education deputy director-general from 1972 to 1976 before being appointed director-general from 1976 to 1985.

He started his career as a teacher with Sultan Abdul Hamid College in



SPECIALLY FOR YOU MR PRIME MINISTER: Ng playing the tune of the song “Tanah Pusaka” while Abdullah applauds. — Bernama picture

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Jitra, Kedah, in 1957 before being appointed headmaster of Sekolah Tuanku Abdul Rahman in Ipoh, Perak.

In 1963, he was made Pahang chief education officer.

Murad is also remembered for his famous “Murad Report” which detailed problems of school dropouts in the 1970s and ways to address this.

He received a plaque, certificate of appreciation and RM10,000.

Winners of this year’s Tokoh Guru

award were Md Ismail Zam Zam (Johor); Alice Wee Siew Eng (Malacca); T. Krishnasamy (Penang); Wan Safinah Saleh (Kelantan) and Ali Suhaili (Sarawak).

They each received a plaque, certificate of appreciation and RM5,000.

Wee said she was delighted with the award and that the role of teacher should stretch beyond being just an educator.

“Teachers must also play a role in helping to mould the character and

overall personality of students,” she said, adding that disciplinary problem among students was also due to lack of parental attention.

Wan Safinah said teachers these days needed to be extra patient with students as the challenges they faced were far different from the 1980s and 1970s.

Krishnasamy said more students should be encouraged to take part in sporting activities for a healthy mind and body.