

A unique monarchy system
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By JOSEPH KAOS Jr

MALAYSIA has one of the most unique monarchy systems in the world, in which its King is elected to serve the country on a rotational basis.

The nine members of the Conference of Rulers elect the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, or Supreme Ruler, who will serve for five years. The nine are the hereditary Malay Rulers from the states of Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Pahang, Negri Sembilan, Perlis, Perak, Selangor and Terengganu.

The rotation system was suggested by Almarhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman, the first Yang di-Pertuan Agong; an idea borrowed from Negri Sembilan where the nine region chiefs take turns to be the Yang di-Pertuan Besar.

Although the membership of the Conference of Rulers also includes the four Yang di-Pertua Negri or governors from the states of Sarawak, Sabah, Malacca and Penang, only the royal Rulers are allowed to vote or stand for election as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong is elected through a secret ballot and the nominee must obtain a majority of five votes to be declared as the new Ruler.

As is the custom, the most senior Ruler is elected as Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

However, this procedure is no longer followed as all nine Rulers have had their turns to be elected.

After the reign of the Sultan of Perak as the ninth Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the Reconstituted List was drawn up and based on the order of the first to the ninth Yang di-Pertuan Agong, and subsequent Kings are to be elected according to this order.

Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, the 14th Yang di-Pertuan Agong, holds the record of being the first to serve as King twice under the rotational system.

His Majesty was the fifth Yang di-Pertuan Agong and reigned from Sept 21, 1970 until Sept 20, 1975.

The new Yang di-Pertuan Agong will appoint a Regent to take over his duties in his home state for the duration of his five-year term as Ruler of the country.

A deputy Yang di-Pertuan Agong is also elected at the same time to stand in whenever the King is away or unable to rule.

Cambodia and Vatican City are the only two other countries besides Malaysia that practise the true elective monarchy' system in the world, where in most countries the monarchy is hereditary.

In Cambodia, candidates of royal blood are chosen to be King for a life term by its Royal Council of the Throne, while in Vatican City, the College of Cardinals will elect the Pope.

In Malaysia's constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy system, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong appears as the formal head of the executive branch.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong appoints the Chief Justice of the Federal Court, President of the Court of Appeal, Chief Judge of Malaya, Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak, judges of the Federal Court, judges of the Court of Appeal and judges of the High Court.

The King is also the head of Islamic Affairs for the states of Malacca, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak which do not have a royal Malay Ruler.

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