

Ruler known to be down-to-earth
TheStarOnline
April 11, 2012
By EMBUN MAJID

TUANKU Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah's close relations with his subjects were evident when Kedahans thronged the stretch of road from Istana Anak Bukit to the Sultan Abdul Halim Airport to send him off when he was appointed 14th Yang di-Pertuan Agong on Dec 13 last year.

For Kedahans, it was history in the making as Tuanku Abdul Halim was ascending the throne for a second time.

When Tuanku Abdul Halim was appointed fifth Yang di-Pertuan Agong on Sept 20, 1970, he was sent off by a large gathering of state dignitaries at the Alor Setar Railway station.

He boarded a three-coach royal train, which had been specially scheduled by Keretapi Tanah Melayu, at 7.30am and arrived in Kuala Lumpur at about noon.

Recalling the historic moment, Datuk Seri Shaari Mohd Daud, 91, who served as the State Secretary in 1970, said a week before Tuanku Abdul Halim departed for Kuala Lumpur, a simple ceremony was held at Balai Besar in Alor Setar to appoint the Ruler's brother Tunku Abdul Malik Sultan Badlishah, as the Regent.

Developer Datuk S.N.K. Alagusundaram, 63, said he still remembered watching the parade held in conjunction with Tuanku Abdul Halim's appointment as King for the first time.

He said Kedahans were in a jubilant mood then and there was a feeling of *dj vu* now.

During Tuanku Abdul Halim's first term as King, he travelled abroad several times, including to Britain at the Invitation of Queen Elizabeth II and to Thailand to meet King Bhumipol Adulyadej.

He loved to keep all of his personal mementoes that he received and collected from his many overseas visits and also photographs that he took over the years.

A special gallery known as Galeri Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah was opened to the public in 2010.

In it was a vast collection of memorable items belonging to Tuanku Abdul Halim, Tuanku Haminah Hamidun, the late Sultanah of Kedah Almarhum Tuanku Bahiyah Tuanku Abdul Rahman and the royal family.

Among the items displayed at the gallery is a photograph taken of Tuanku Abdul Halim riding a horse carriage in London with Queen Elizabeth.

Consultant engineer Ng Kok Beng who supervised the installation of a fountain in Jalan Teluk Wanjah to commemorate the first installation of Tuanku Abdul Halim as King, said the Tuanku was a down-to-earth and dignified person.

On the many occasions that he met the Ruler while serving as senior executive engineer with the Kedah PWD in 1970, he found Tuanku Abdul Halim to be someone who always had the interests of the people close to his heart.

Photographer Cheow Joi Cheong, 56, who has been snapping shots of the Royal family for many years, said Tuanku Abdul Halim was also a photo enthusiast.

"He would also take an interest in the type of equipment I used," he added.

Cheow said it was an honour to perform the role and he had also followed the Royal family on several out-of-town events.

Copyright © 1995-2012 Star Publications (M) Bhd

Source:

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/4/11/nation/11052792&sec=nation>