



Tuanku Muhriz (right) performing his prayers at Masjid Negeri in Seremban in conjunction with the Maulidur Rasul celebration.



(From left) Tunku Zain with squash athletes Saurav Ghosal of India and Aifa Azman of Malaysia and Squash Racquets Association of Malaysia president Gerard Monteiro at the National Squash Centre in Bukit Jalil in November 2021. — IZZRAFIA ALIAS/The Star

# Charitable and beloved royals

BORN in the royal town of Seri Menanti on Jan 14, 1948, Tuanku Muhriz Tuanku Munawir was the sole male heir to the ninth Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan, Tuanku Munawir Tuanku Abdul Rahman, and Tuanku Ampuan Durah Tuanku Besar Burhanuddin.

The grandson of the country's first Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Rahman Tuanku Muhammad, Tuanku Muhriz spent his childhood in Negri Sembilan, attending Tuanku Muhammad School in Kuala Pilah, Tunku Besar School in Tampin and later King George V Secondary School in Seremban.

At just 12 years old, he was made Tunku Laxamana, second in rank among the Putera Yang Empat or four senior princes.

The following year, he was appointed Tunku Besar Seri Menanti, the most senior rank among the four princes, a title he held until he ascended the throne as the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan on Oct 26, 2009.

The young prince furthered his studies abroad and completed his O- and A-Levels at Aldenham School, a prestigious boarding school in England.

It was at this school that Tuanku Muhriz honed his love for music, playing guitar and leading a band called The Prince and the Paupers.

The Ruler, who enjoys jazz and music from the 1960s with The Beatles being among his favourite bands, still strums his guitar whenever he has the chance.

This love for music is something Tuanku Muhriz has passed on to his second prince, Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin, an accomplished pianist and the patron of the Euroasia Association of Performing Arts, which is dedicated to the education, development and promotion of performing arts in Malaysia.

After finishing his studies at Aldenham School, the Ruler attended the University of Wales, Aberystwyth (now Aberystwyth University) — a notable university that has turned out some distinguished students like HRH Prince of Wales — where he read law and was a keen sportsman.

Graduating with an LLB (Hons) in 1970, Tuanku Muhriz headed home to Malaysia, where he joined the corporate sector and built a career spanning banking, finance and advertising.

Although the Ruler did not practise law, his contributions to



Tuanku Muhriz (centre) visiting villagers in Kampung Datuk Mansor, Seremban, in November 2020, after the area was affected by flash floods. Flanking him are his sons Tunku Ali (on Tuanku Muhriz's right) and Tunku Zain. — SARBAN SINGH/The Star

the corporate world and charitable initiatives earned him an Honorary Fellowship from his alma mater Aberystwyth University in 2014.

Soon after returning to Malaysia, the Ruler met his other half while they were both working in a bank.

On April 25, 1974, Tuanku Muhriz tied the knot with Tunku Ampuan Besar of Negri Sembilan Tuanku Aishah Rohani Tengku Besar Mahmud, a member of the Terengganu royalty.

The royal couple were blessed with three princes — Tunku Ali Redhaudin, Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin and Tunku Alif Hussein Saifuddin Al-Amin.

Tuanku Muhriz has always contributed to charitable causes and was a member of the Rotary Club Kuala Lumpur Diraja, lending his time and effort to causes that encompassed education, healthcare and social welfare.

The Ruler continues to offer his support to initiatives that better the lives of the less privileged.

Tuanku Muhriz has received many accolades for his tireless efforts. The Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Medical Centre, one of the country's best teaching hospitals, was renamed Hospital

Canselor Tuanku Muhriz UKM in his honour.

His support for healthcare in aid of impoverished communities in Malaysia and the advancement of surgery also earned him an Honorary Fellowship from the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh.

Tuanku Muhriz is a family man who enjoys spending time with Tuanku Aishah Rohani and their children. His passion for service has also rubbed off on his two eldest princes, who are equally dedicated to causes that range from education to the performing arts.

Tuanku Aishah Rohani is the Chancellor of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) and the royal patron of the Inner Wheel Club of Kuala Lumpur — a branch of International Inner Wheel, one of the largest women's service voluntary organisations in the world.

The saying that charity begins at home couldn't ring truer for this royal family.

Yayasan Munarah, named in honour of Tuanku Muhriz's parents Tuanku Munawir Tuanku Abdul Rahman and Tuanku Ampuan Durah Tuanku Besar Burhanuddin, was one of the first

initiatives undertaken by the Negri Sembilan royal family just months after Tuanku Muhriz ascended the throne.

In his role as Yayasan Munarah board of trustee chairman, the couple's eldest son, Tunku Besar Seri Menanti Tunku Ali Redhaudin, continues to serve the less privileged in our midst.

Since the foundation's launch, millions of ringgit has been channelled for various efforts to help the underprivileged, including providing financial aid to deserving students, regardless of race or religion.

Born on April 26, 1977, Tunku Ali completed his GCSE and A-Levels at Marlborough College in Wiltshire, England, before pursuing a degree in History and Social and Political Science at Cambridge University.

The prince worked abroad for a number of years but since his return, he has been actively involved in charitable causes.

He is currently on the board of trustees of Teach for Malaysia, a non-profit dedicated to ensuring that Malaysian children have equal educational opportunities, and is the chairman of wildlife NGO

WWF-Malaysia.

He also completed a Master in Public Administration at Harvard Kennedy School, the public policy and public administration school of the prestigious Harvard University in the US, and is USIM's Pro-Chancellor.

The royal couple's second prince Tunku Zain was born on July 6, 1982. Following in his older brother's footsteps, the prince spent his formative years at Marlborough College.

Tunku Zain pursued tertiary education at the London School of Economics and Political Science, graduating with an honours degree in Sociology and Government, and later with an MSc in Comparative Politics.

The prince is founding president of the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (Ideas), and sits on the board of several corporations as well as non-profit organisations.

A newspaper columnist, passionate speaker, gifted musician and avid sportsman who enjoys squash and tennis, Tunku Zain is a prince who wears many hats.

The prince is a trustee of Yayasan Munarah, Yayasan Chow Kit and the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation. In 2020, he was also made Pro-Chancellor of UCSI University.

As the president of the Negri Sembilan Squash Association, Tunku Zain is a driving force in the development of the state's sporting talent.

The state has produced several stellar squash players, including US Junior Open champion Harleem Tan.

The royal couple's third child, Tunku Alif Hussein Saifuddin Al-Amin, was born on Sept 3, 1984. Hands-on parents, Tuanku Muhriz and Tuanku Aishah Rohani took up courses in the therapy and treatment of children with special needs in the United States in order to give Tunku Alif, who was born with special needs, the best possible start.

So dedicated were the couple that they also designed a programme to help nurture their son's abilities and enhance his quality of life.

Tunku Alif was doted on by his parents and older brothers until his passing on Jan 15, 2016. To this day, the royal family continues to lend their support to initiatives that raise awareness of and extend help to individuals with special needs.