A MAN OF FEW WORDS

‘WORK WAS RAZAK’S PRIORITY’

Arshad recounts how he met country’s second premier for the first time

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He can eat with the beggars and dine with the King. That’s the description 89-year-old Tan Sri Arshad Ayub gave when asked of his impression of second prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein.

Arshad’s first interaction with Razak was when he became the principal of the Mara College of Business and Professional Studies in 1965.

Razak, he said, could blend himself with people from all walks of life and positions.

Arshad remembered Razak as “a man of few words but friendly. He was very hardworking. Work was his top priority. His integrity was beyond question. And everyone was prepared to work for him. Some probably would die for him, too.”

Arshad was attached to the Rural Industrial Development Authority (Rida) as assistant rural development officer in 1951 and was seconded as principal of the Rida Training Centre in 1965. Razak was education minister in 1955, and later became rural development minister in 1957.

“I was in a group of 13 Malays to be the first batch for Rida. Razak became the education minister and was later the rural development minister. That’s where I knew Razak. He was the minister responsible for the development of Rida.”

Arshad wasn’t sure who was instrumental in giving his name to Razak for him.