MANICKA IS DEAD

Bahan asal dari Arkib
Negara Malaysia

Heart attack claims MIC chief

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Transport Minister and MIC president Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam died of a heart attack this evening, eight days after his 53rd birthday.

He had complained of giddiness when he returned home from office at 5.45p.m. and was sent to hospital. He died on the way, at 7.15p.m.

Tan Sri Manickavasagam's death marked the passing of the last of the Merdeka generation of leaders still in active service; for the Malaysian Indian Congress, it means the passing of the last of its founding fathers.

He was the longest-serving member of the Cabinet (he has served since 1964, after being an Assistant Minister since 1959), and also one of the longest-serving MPs, having represented Pelabohan Kelang (formerly Klang) since 1959.

Check-up in London

Tan Sri Manickavasagam had a history of a heart ailment and been ailing for some time. He underwent heart surgery in London in 1976, and had recently undergone a check-up in Harley Street a month ago.

He continued with his busy schedule on his return.

He had been all day at work today. When he returned home at 5.45p.m., he complained about giddiness and sent for his brothers, Dr Rajagopal, and Selangor Executive Councillor V.L. Kandan. Dr Rajagopal immediately sent for an ambulance to take him to the General Hospital.

General Hospital director Prof Datuk R.P. Pillay said Tan Sri Manickavasagam died of a blockage of the artery.

MIC secretary-general Senator M. Mahalingam said the funeral would be held on Sunday. The body would be taken from the house at 5, Lorong Duta, for cremation in Klang.

Tan Sri Manickavasagam leaves two sons and three daughters.

MIC vice-president Datuk K. Pathmanaban said Tan Sri Manickavasagam had only today fixed the wedding date for his second daughter Kasturi, who is studying in Australia. Kasturi and her brother Rejendra, who is working in London, are flying home.

Tan Sri Manicka
15 years in Cabinet

Tan Sri Manickavasagam had had a hectic year both as Minister and as party leader.

As Transport Minister, he had to deal with the controversial MAS strike that led to the grounding of the airline, problems at the new Kuantan port that caused its opening to be delayed several times, and problems in clearing containers at Port Klang.

As party leader, he successfully saw the party through its general assembly in June while trying to ensure a smooth succession of party leadership.

He was returned unopposed as party leader for his fourth term since he succeeded Tun V.T. Sambanthan, but had spoken of stepping down because of his health.

All MIC functions have been cancelled till further notice and the party would announce a period of mourning. The party's deputy president, Datuk S. Samy Vellu, was in Kluang when he was informed of the death. He returned to the capital immediately.

News of Tan Sri Manickavasagam's death spread through town quickly, and many people began calling at the house.

'A great loss'

Among the first to call were Prime Minister Datuk Hussein Onn and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdullah Ayub, Dewan Negara president Tan Sri Omar Yoke-Lin Ong, Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Syed Nasir Ismail, Works and Utilities Minister and MCA president Datuk Lee San Choon, Primary Industries Minister and Gerakan secretary-general Datuk Paul Leong, Agriculture Minister Datuk Shariff Ahmad and Welfare Minister Datin Paduka Hajjah Aishah Ghani.

About 200 MIC and Barisan Nasional members had gathered at the house by midnight.

Tan Sri Manickavasagam's old friend and ex-Cabinet colleague Encik Mohamed Khir Johari reacted with shock tonight at the news of his friend's death. "I am shocked he died at so young an age. He was not only a good friend of mine but a good Cabinet Minister. This is a great loss to the nation. He was a fine leader of the Indian community. He spared no effort in resolving their problems."

Minister of Works and Utilities Datuk Lee San Choon said: "This is a great grief to all of us. He was not just a colleague, he was a friend. I can look back on so many years of working together. This is a great loss not just to the Indian community but also to the country and all Malaysians. Because we were working together, this is a great personal loss to me."