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Mahathir-Ibu Tien

DR MAHATHIR AND WIFE PAY LAST RESPECTS TO IBU TIEN

By: Khairdzir Yunus

SURAKARTA (Central Java), April 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali today paid their last respects to President Suharto's wife, Ibu Tien, who died of a heart attack yesterday.

The Prime Minister and his wife arrived at 11.23am at Dalem Kalitan, Ibu Tien's family home here where her body was taken to yesterday.

They conveyed their condolences to President Suharto and his children.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Malaysia's Ambassador to Indonesia Datuk Zainal Abidin Alias and their wives.

Ibu Tien, whose full name is Siti Hartinah Suharto, passed away aged 72 at the Gatot Subroto Military Hospital in Jakarta at 5.10am.

In an interview with a local television station just before leaving Dalem Kalitan, Dr Mahathir said he was shocked by news of Ibu Tien's death and hoped that Indonesians would be patient in their hour of bereavement.

The Prime Minister and his wife left Dalem Kalitan at about 11.50am.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir was met on arrival at the Adisumarmo Airport here at about 10.30am by Tourism, Post and Telecommunications Minister Joop Ave and the President's son-in-law Mej Jen Prabowo Subianto.

Among other leaders of neighbouring countries who also paid their last respects were the Sultan of Brunei, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Thai Prime Minister Banharn Silpa-Archa.

Ibu Tien will be buried at the family graveyard, situated about 30km from Dalem Kalitan, this afternoon. -- BERNAMA

KHY YBY