

14 OCT 1996

Chee Khooon-Tribute

PM AND GOVT LEADERS PAY TRIBUTE TO TAN CHEE KHOON

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today led many government leaders in paying tribute to "Mr Opposition" Tan Sri Dr Tan Chee Khooon who died yesterday after a long illness.

Dr Tan, 77, who was a member of Parliament for almost two decades, leaves his wife Puan Sri Liew Foong Ying, 74, three sons and three daughters.

His funeral service will be held at Wesley Methodist Church in Cheras at about 10.30am on Wednesday.

Dr Mahathir arrived at the late Dr Tan's house at Persiaran Madge, Off Jalan U Thant, at about 11.15am and spent about 10 minutes there.

Earlier, speaking to reporters after opening the Malaysia Design Conference '96, Dr Mahathir said he was saddened by the death.

He said the government valued the role of Dr Tan who spoke out against weaknesses, irregularities and errors in the government administration.

"If a government is not criticised, I am sure it will commit wrongs, and that was the role of Dr Tan Chee Khooon," he said.

For that service to the nation, he said, Dr Tan was conferred the Panglima Setia Mahkota with the title of Tan Sri after he retired from politics.

Dr Mahathir said the recognition accorded Dr Tan did not mean that all opposition members had his qualities.

"All others just opposed, without any basis, but Dr Tan played his role well and we value that role. We share the sadness of his family which has lost a loved one," he said.

Transport Minister and MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who also visited Dr Tan's house to pay his last respects, said the country has lost an illustrious and noble person.

"Tan Sri was a shining example of honesty and political courage. Although he was in the opposition, he was well respected by everybody," said Dr Ling.

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee said Dr Tan set an example to the opposition as to what they should and could be.

He described Dr Tan as one of the greatest leaders in Malaysia and considered it a unique case as Dr Tan was from the opposition.

Deputy Home Minister Ong Ka Ting said he admired Dr Tan for his firm stand on the causes he believed in and for championing the underdogs.

He hoped the spirit of Dr Tan's political struggle and the qualities of his leadership would become models for the younger generation.

Others who called at Dr Tan's house included Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Wong See Wah, Deputy Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism Datuk Teng Gaik Kwan and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Tan Chai Ho.

Former Information Minister Tan Sri Shariff Ahmad and former Senate President Tun Omar Yoke Lin Ong also visited the family to pay their respects.

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