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Umno records deep condolence over Yahaya's tragic death

THE Umno Supreme Council has recorded its deepest condolence over the tragic and sudden death of DRB-Hicom chairman and chief executive officer Tan Sri Yahaya Ahmad.

The council also recorded its special appreciation to the late DRB-Hicom chairman for his contributions to the party and the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Umno president who chaired the two-hour meeting in Kuala Lumpur last night told reporters during a news conference:

"The Supreme Council meeting would like to record its deepest condolence ... and appreciation to Tan Sri Yahaya for what he had done to the party and country."

Earlier in the day, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who was one of the last persons to have seen Yahaya alive, described Yahaya's death as a personal loss and a loss to the nation.

"He has been my friend since school days and was a prominent entrepreneur whom we are proud of," he said.

Anwar also related the informal gathering of the Malay College Old Boys Association for their ex-teachers which he hosted. Yahaya was responsible for contacting the ex-teachers.

"Yahaya did not look too cheerful last night (Monday) and I thought the reason was because his mother was ill," he said, when asked if he had noticed anything different with Yahaya at the gathering.

"He and his wife Rahana left at 10pm after he informed me that his mother was very ill in Kuala Terengganu."

Anwar expressed his concern to Yahaya about their leaving by helicopter at night but Yahaya explained that his mother was very ill and he had to leave that night.

"At 1am, I was informed about the missing helicopter and later, confirmation that it had crashed."

Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie said he was both shocked and sad to hear of Tan Sri Yahaya Ahmad's sudden and tragic death.

"I am very sad. Yahaya was an action-oriented man and he has played a very dynamic role in the nation's economic and social activities," he said.

Bernama reports: Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak said the late Yahaya was a businessman with extraordinary abilities and was an internationally recognised corporate leader.

He had earned the confidence and trust of government leaders who entrusted him with the responsibility of running the national car industry and other major industries in the country, Najib said.

His untimely death was a great and irreplaceable loss to the country and the Bumiputera community which was just stepping into the world of business and it had looked up to him as a role model, he added.

Najib said the important thing now is to continue his good work and ensure that the industries and corporate organisations which the late Yahaya managed so well continue to function smoothly and achieve their objectives.

"I knew Yahaya when I was Pahang Menteri Besar in 1984. He was always a man of low profile and established a good track record," he added.

"It's a national loss - he was holding key positions both nationally and internationally and was in the forefront in global market penetration such as when he spearheaded the team in the takeover of Lotus International."

Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said Yahaya's tragic death was a great loss to Malaysia because he represented the cream of entrepreneurship in the country, a corporate captain of high standard and also represented the hopes of Bumiputeras in Malaysia.

Kuala Lumpur Malay Chamber of Commerce President Datuk Izat Emir said the late Yahaya was a dynamic and futuristic leader and his leadership qualities were very much evident when he led the Malay Chamber of Commerce of Malaysia.

Chamber members had looked up to him for leadership, he added.

President of the Malaysian Associated Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Senator Datuk V.K.K. Teagarajan said the death of Yahaya was a great loss to the chamber.

He made immense contributions to the country's business community and as a businessman, the late Yahaya had total commitment, Teagarajan said.

National Landscape department director-general Ismail Ngah said Yahaya will be sorely missed by environmentalists. Ismail said he was with Yahaya on Monday when the Prime Minister launched the national tree planting campaign in Kuala Lumpur.

He recalled the late Yahaya's words: "Everyone should preserve trees and the country's scenic beauty." Ismail expressed the hope that Malaysians would take note of that.

Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon also sent a condolence message to the family of the late Yahaya. Dr Koh said he and his family were shocked and dismayed on hearing the news of the tragedy.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said Yahaya's death was a big loss. The country very much needed his abilities and services to spearhead the development of the Bumiputera corporate sector, he said.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat hopes Bumiputera entrepreneurs will live up to the examples set by the late Yahaya.

The late Yahaya's success in business locally and internationally should serve as a model to Bumiputeras, he said.

"The Government very much feels his passing particularly from the aspect of creating a Bumiputera commercial and industrial community," he said.

MIC president and Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said Yahaya's death was a great loss to all Malaysians.

The success he achieved in the various sectors including the national car industry was an example to the people, he said. His death had robbed the nation of his invaluable services, Samy Vellu added.

In Kuantan, Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob expressed shock and grief over the death of Yahaya. His death was a great loss to the automotive world, he said.

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