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Tun Sharifah was a pillar of strength for Tunku, says PM

PENANG, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today described the late Tun Sharifah Rodziah as the pillar of strength for her late husband, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra.

"As the First Lady during the Tunku's era, Tun Sharifah Rodziah was her husband's pillar of strength," he told reporters after paying his last respects to Sharifah Rodziah at her house in Jalan Park here.

"She had in some ways made many contributions. She supported the Tunku in his many struggles and to achieve the country's independence," he said.

Dr Mahathir arrived at the late Tunku's residence about 3.40pm accompanied by his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

They also spent about 20 minutes with the late Tunku's children including his sons Tunku Ahmad Nerang and Tunku Suleiman.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and his wife Puan Sri Chui Kah Peng were also present.

About 500 people, who included family members and friends of Sharifah Rodziah, also paid their last respects.

Besides State dignitaries, State DAP leaders Tanjung MP Chow Kon Yeow, Bukit Mertajam MP Chong Eng and Batu Lintang State Assemblyman Danny Law were also present.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who had arrived earlier in the afternoon, also echoed Dr Mahathir's sentiments.

He said Sharifah Rodziah was an exemplary wife and mother who had made many sacrifices and contributions to the late Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Tun Sharifah Rodziah's role as a wife and mother should also be emulated by all women, he said.

"And her continuous support and efforts to achieve the Tunku's struggles were some of her most outstanding contributions... they are sacrifices which the people greatly appreciate."

It is also for these reasons, he added, that she was conferred the title "Tun".

Meanwhile, the Tunku's former aide-de-camp Assistant Superintendent Owen Chung described Sharifah Rodziah as a firm and fair woman.

Although a no-nonsense lady, she was very approachable, he said.

"I would take her out for a drive in the evenings while she was still well," added the 67-year-old retired police officer who served the late Tunku for 16 years.

The cortege, which left for the Royal Cemetery in Langgar about 4.30pm, arrived around 6pm.

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