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Agong-Military

ARMED FORCES GIVE FINAL SALUTE TO LATE KING

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 22 (Bernama) -- In a noon ceremony steeped in military tradition the Malaysian Armed Forces today gave its final salute to their Supreme Commander the late Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.

Sultan Salahuddin, as Malaysia's 11th Yang di-Pertuan Agong or paramount ruler who died of heart failure at age 75 yesterday, was Field Marshal of the defence forces.

A guard of honour mounted by 120 officers and men of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment commanded by Maj Hamdan Musa gave the final salute at Merdeka Square in front of the historic Sultan Abdul Samad building here.

The ceremony commenced upon arrival at the square of the coffin bearing the King's remains mounted on a carriage drawn over three kilometres by slow-marching soldiers from Istana Negara after the lying-in-state.

The Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Siti Aishah, the Deputy Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Mizan Zainal Abdin, Permaisuri Nur Zahirah, the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi accompanied the carriage on foot.

The hour-long journey to the square took the carriage past several city landmarks such as the Federal Territory Syariah courthouse, the Kuala Lumpur railway station, the National Mosque and the Dayabumi complex.

Following the final salute, the coffin was transferred to a hearse by 12 military pall-bearers representing the tri-services of the armed forces after a military band played the national anthem.

The hearse then left the square headed for Klang for the funeral proper ahead of a motorcade carrying Tuanku Siti Aishah, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abdin, Permaisuri Nur Zahirah, Dr Mahathir, Datuk Seri Abdullah members of the Cabinet and other dignitaries.

With today declared a public holiday and a day of mourning, city-dwellers and out-of-towners thronged the square to watch the ceremony or monitor the telecast of the lying-in-state and earlier rites from a giant screen erected there.

-- BERNAMA

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