

22/11/2001

Nation mourns (HL)

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The nation today began mourning the passing of the 11th Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah al-Haj Ibni Almarhum Sultan Hisamuddin Alam Shah al-Haj.

The King, 75, passed away at 11.57 this morning after a prolonged illness.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced the King's death in an address to the nation over radio and television at 1.50pm.

"With great sadness and regret, I announce that the 11th Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah al-Haj Ibni Almarhum Sultan Hisamuddin Alam Shah al-Haj passed away at 11.57 this morning at the Gleneagles Intan Medical Centre," he said.

The King died two months after he was first admitted to the Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore for a heart surgery to implant a pacemaker.

Dr Mahathir declared a seven-day period of national mourning and urged all relevant parties to fly their flags at half-mast.

In Selangor, the State Government declared 40 days of mourning.

The Prime Minister also announced the cancellation of all official government functions for today and tomorrow as a mark of respect.

Dr Mahathir said the new Sultan of Selangor would be proclaimed tomorrow.

The King had been on ventilator and under heavy sedation since Sunday, when his breathing and kidney functions were supported by machines.

The King's earlier heart failure progressively worsened since Oct 6, and he suffered renal failure on Oct 15. His condition deteriorated rapidly since then.

The King's condition took a turn for the worse on Nov 17 and had to be on the ventilator in the Cardiac Care Unit of the Singapore hospital.

He was, however, flown back to Kuala Lumpur at 5.30am the next day.

A team of 27 specialists representing various medical disciplines from the Gleneagles Intan Medical Centre, Kuala Lumpur Hospital, National Heart Institute, Selayang Hospital and Kajang Hospital attended to the King round-the-clock since his return from Singapore on Sunday.

The Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Siti Aishah and Regent of Selangor Tengku Idris Shah were among close family members who were at his bedside when the King died.

Speaking at a Press conference after the official announcement, Dr Mahathir said the body of the King was taken to Istana Selangor here to allow family members and relatives to pay their last respects.

The body will remain there until tomorrow morning where it will be cleansed.

It will then be taken to the National Mosque for funeral prayers.

It will be later taken to Istana Negara for the lying-in-state, where members of the public and dignitaries will have the opportunity to pay their last respects.

From the palace, the body will be taken to Jalan Raja where members of the armed forces will pay tribute to their Supreme Commander.

The cortege will then leave for Istana Alam Shah in Klang and the King laid to rest next to his father at the Royal Mausoleum in Jugra near Banting.

The last King to die in office was Tuanku Yahya Petra ibni Al-Marhum

Sultan Ibrahim of Kelantan who died of heart attack on March 29, 1979.

Sultan Salahuddin was born on March 8, 1926 at Istana Bandar, Kuala Langat and installed as Raja Muda of Selangor on May 13, 1950.

He was proclaimed the seventh Sultan of Selangor on Sept 3, 1960 and the 11th Yang di-Pertuan Agong on April 26, 1999.