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Dr Mahathir's elder brother Mashahor, 79, dies in his sleep

SUNGAI PETANI, Mon. - The elder brother of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Mashahor Mohamad, died this morning. He was 79.

Mashahor died of old age at his home at 17E, Jalan Kapal Terbang, here.

A former deputy director of the Kedah Labour Department, he leaves behind wife Fatimah Sham Ahmad, 71, seven children and 16 grandchildren.

Dr Mahathir flew in from Kuala Lumpur to pay his last respects.

Arriving at the Sultan Abdul Halim Airport in Alor Star at 1.30pm, the Prime Minister was accompanied by his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, and their children Datin Paduka Marina, Datuk Mokhzani, Mukhriz and Mirzan.

They were joined by Mashahor's family and Dr Mahathir's two elder sisters, Rofeah and Habsah.

Dr Mahathir is the youngest of five siblings. Another elder brother, Mahadi, died two years ago.

Mashahor's eldest son, Zulkifli, 50, who came from Penang, said his father usually woke up early for subuh prayers before going back to bed.

"The maid came to wake him up at 9.45am today for breakfast but the door was locked and she got no response.

"She informed my younger sister Roseniah, 47, who also lives in the house. After forcing open the door, they were unable to wake him."

Zulkifli said the family called a doctor who pronounced Mashahor dead.

Penang Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Abas, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain and several Kedah Executive Council members also came to pay their last respects. Mashahor was brought to the Sultan Muzaffar Shah mosque here for prayers (sembahyang jenazah).

He was buried at the Kampung Penghulu Him burial ground here.