

05 JUL 2003

Sulaiman-Dies

SULAIMAN NINAM SHAH DIES

KUALA LUMPUR, July 5 (Bernama) -- Umno Permanent Chairman, Tun Sulaiman Ninam Shah, died in Pantai Medical Centre here early today.

Sulaiman, 83, who suffered from leukaemia, died at 5am, said his son Hassan.

His remains would be brought to his birthplace in Muar, Johor, for burial.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali paid their respects at Sulaiman's residence on Jalan 14/47, Petaling Jaya at 9.30am.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is expected to arrive in Muar at noon for Sulaiman's burial.

Sulaiman, who was the Umno permanent chairman since 1975, had expressed his sadness for not being able to attend the 54th Umno General Assembly held last June 17-21 at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

During his 28-year term as Umno permanent chairman, Sulaiman had never failed to attend the event. However poor health had prevented him from doing so this time around.

"I am disappointed for not being able to attend (the Umno general assembly), furthermore this is Dr Mahathir's last as Umno president and prime minister and I should have been there as my term ends next year but my (poor) health forbids me from doing so," he said in an interview with Bernama on June 18, his last with the media.

Despite looking haggard during the interview, Sulaiman was very enthusiastic when he talked on the Umno general assembly.

Sulaiman was earlier admitted to the medical centre for more than two months for treatment of leukaemia.

"I have been told to go to Pantai (Pantai Medical Centre) tomorrow or the next day for another month of treatment," he said at the interview.

He advised party members to remain united and give their undivided support for the Umno leadership.

Sulaiman had also urged Umno members to be loyal to the party as he himself had remained with the party since joining it in 1946.

"As for the Umno members, they should not sideline the party veterans as they are the people who fought for the Malay rights before this," said Sulaiman.

In MUAR, Sulaiman's remains were buried at the Bakri Muslim cemetery, located some nine km from his residence at Jalan Abdul Rahman here, after the Asar prayers.

Sulaiman's family members, friends and elected representatives accompanied the body to its final resting place.

Johor Mufti Datuk Noh Gadut performed the tahlil prayers and the burial was completed at 4.45pm.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin were among those who paid their last respects at Sulaiman's residence here.

-- BERNAMA

MNY AZZ ZUL