

26 AUG 2003

Sultanah-Dies

SULTANAH OF KEDAH DIES AFTER WEEK-LONG ILLNESS

ALOR STAR, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- The Sultanah of Kedah, Tuanku Hajah Bahiyah ibni Almarhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman, passed away at Istana Kuala Cegar here at 12.23pm today, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain announced today.

Her Royal Highness was 72 years old.

Syed Razak, who made the announcement at Wisma Darul Aman here, said the late Sultanah had been ill for one week.

The Menteri Besar also said that as a mark of respect, the Kedah Government had declared tomorrow a public holiday for the State.

He said the State would observe one week of mourning, until Sept 1, and during that period all forms of entertainment and celebrations were cancelled.

He said all State, Federal and other flags would be flown at half mast during the seven-day mourning period.

Syed Razak said the Sultanah's remains would lie in state at Istana Anak Bukit here from 9am until 12.50pm, tomorrow.

Prayers would be performed at 12.50pm and the remains are scheduled for burial at the Langgar Royal Mausoleum at 2.30pm.

Syed Razak said the public can pay their last respects to the late Sultanah between 9am and 11am, while the heads of departments and State Government representatives can do so from 11am until noon.

He said the Malay Rulers and their consorts would be paying their last respects between noon and 12.50pm.

Syed Razak said the cortege would pass through the Darulaman Highway, Jalan Sultanah and Jalan Langgar en route to the Langgar Royal Mausoleum.

He advised the public to be decently-dressed, when paying their last respects to the late Sultanah.

Syed Razak said during the mourning period, Muslim men were advised to wear a black songkok with a white sash around it, while non-Muslims should wear a white band on their left arm sleeve.

He said a 73-gun salute would be fired during the funeral at the Langgar Royal Mausoleum tomorrow.

Meanwhile, 17-gun salute was fired when the Menteri Besar announced the Sultanah's demise.

Syed Razak said the State-level Merdeka Day celebrations, scheduled to be held at Medan Tunku here on Aug 31, had been cancelled while other events had been put off to a date after the mourning period.

He said the Keeper of The Rulers' Seal had been informed of the demise of the Kedah Sultanah.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to arrive here this evening, followed by his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, later tonight.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong and Malay Rulers are expected to pay their last respects tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

SN MAN ZS ZUL SRI