

# Leaders bemoan loss of a very good friend

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The death of Dewan Rakyat Speaker, Tun Dr Mohamed Zahir Ismail, is regarded by many as a loss of a good friend who can never be replaced.

He is known by many senior Cabinet ministers, including former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, a friend of more than 55 years.

Met at the National Mosque after performing prayers for the deceased, Dr Mahathir said he was inconsolable at the loss of his old friend.

Earlier, former MCA president Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik, who paid his respects at Zahir's Bukit Tunku home, said he was

sad at the loss of the former judge "because I have lost one very good friend."

Dr Ling said he and his wife were very close with Zahir as the latter spoke Mandarin well and often borrowed tapes of Mandarin lessons from his family.

Others who paid their respects were Perak Mentri Besar Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Mohd Bakri Omar and DAP chairman Karpal Singh.

Opposition Leader and Ipoh Timur MP Lim Kit Siang, who is

currently overseas, expressed shock over Zahir's death.

"I was very shocked when DAP national deputy chairman and Kepong MP Dr Tan Seng Giaw telephoned me yesterday (Thursday) evening to inform me of Tun Mohamed Zahir Ismail's death," he said.

In his statement from New Delhi where he is attending a three-day conference on the restoration of democracy in Myanmar, Lim said he was at Singapore's Changi Airport when he received the news.

"The opposition, the DAP and myself send our deepest condolences to his family on their latest bereavement," he said.