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Azizan-Obituary

AZIZAN: MAN OF QUIET, HUMBLE DISPOSITION DESPITE PROMINENCE

KUALA LUMPUR, July 14 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin, 69, who passed away suddenly here today, was always hailed as a man with a quiet and humble disposition despite prominent positions he held in both the public and private sectors.

The soft-spoken Azizan also maintained a dignified persona when heading numerous renowned corporations and public entities that he was appointed to.

After retiring from government service in 1988 when he was Secretary-General of Home Affairs Ministry, he made a smooth transition to the private sector when he joined Petronas as President and Chief Executive in 1988. It was a time when the national oil corporation was fast entrenching itself as a leading oil and gas company globally.

He was also Chairman of Malaysia Airlines, Putrajaya Corporation and KLCC Holdings (M) Sdn Bhd.

Besides this, he held chairmanships in Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd, MTBE Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Petronas Dagangan Bhd, Malaysia LNG Sdn Bhd and KLCC Suria Sdn Bhd.

Azizan was always passionate about the entities he headed. He was especially proud of the Petronas Twin Towers and Suria KLCC, which had become a world landmark and a haven for shoppers.

He once remarked that he was glad that many Malaysians had shown a greater level of hygiene and cleanliness while at the Petronas Twin Towers and surrounding areas, which reflected their immense pride for a world renowned landmark located in Malaysia.

Azizan was also instrumental in overseeing development work of Putrajaya, the country's federal administrative capital which is now another source of pride for Malaysians.

He also worked tirelessly to turn around Malaysia Airlines' revenues in the last two years in his capacity as chairman of the national carrier

after it was taken over by the government. Malaysia Airlines had hit financial turbulence when it was in private ownership in the late 1990s.

One of his last major public events was announcing Petronas's record earnings for the year ended March 31, 2003, just two weeks ago. He projected that the national oil corporation would scale greater heights this year.

Azizan also inaugurated the opening of the RM207 million wind tunnel for aerodynamic testing for the Sauber-Petronas Formula One car together with the team's principal Peter Sauber in Hinwil outside Zurich last December.

He had expressed the hope then that Team Sauber-Petronas would perform better this year from the improved aerodynamics.

Sauber-Petronas is currently in sixth place in the Formula One constructors' championship with 18 points after 11 races, a performance which is a vast improvement over last year.

Among the many honours bestowed on him was the Order of the Commander of the Legion of Honour by the French government in October 2003.

He was also given a Norwegian award for "outstanding contribution to quality" in the management category in 1992 and the Friendship Medal by the Vietnamese government in September 2001.

Born on May 28, 1935 in Ayer Itam, Penang, he had his early education at Sekolah Melayu Kg Baru before gaining admission into the renowned Penang Free School.

Thereafter, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Universiti Malaya (UM) in 1959 besides undergoing a course on Development and Administration at Oxford University and the Royal College of Defence in the United Kingdom.

He also has a Honorary Doctorate of Economics from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

Azizan started his career with the Ministry of Education in 1960 before being appointed Secretary to the National Operations Council in 1969, serving in the capacity of private secretary to Malaysia's second prime minister, Tun Abdul Razak in 1976.

He was then made Secretary-General to the Ministry of Trade and

Industry in 1984. He became Secretary-General of the Home Ministry in 1985 when former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was also the Home Minister.

Kuala Lumpur Mayor Datuk Mohamad Shaid Mohd Taufek said Azizan attended a meeting yesterday morning at Cityhall here as a member of the newly-set up Management Coordination Committee on Federal Territories.

It was the first meeting of the panel and chaired by Federal Territories Minister Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Samad.

" Tan Sri Azizan spoke a lot at the meeting. He told us of his vision to turn Putrajaya into a beautiful city that won't be spoilt by over-development like Kuala Lumpur," Mohamad Shaid told Bernama.

" He even apologised to me for saying so. He said KL was so beautiful at one time but now it is too cluttered," he said.

He quoted Azizan as saying that so much painstaking efforts and money had gone into the development of Kuala Lumpur and if it was not well looked after, its beauty would be lost further.

" He told us many other things at the meeting. I feel that I have lost a fellow public servant of extraordinary qualities, integrity and honesty.

" Tan Sri Azizan kept a low profile but he produced big results," said the mayor.

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