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Sultanah Bahiyah laid to rest

Abdul Razak Ahmad; Alina Simon; Sheridan Mahavera
ALOR STAR, Wed. - The Sultanah of Kedah, Tuanku Bahiyah Tuanku Abdul Rahman, 73, who died yesterday, was laid to rest at the Langgar Royal Mausoleum here at 3.22pm today.

More than 1,000 people, including the Kedah royal family and State Government officials, were earlier led in the sembahyang jenazah at 10.05am by Masjid Zahir imam Syeikh Roslan Abd Halim.

The Sultan of Kedah, Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, paid his last respects to the Sultanah at the Balai Penghadapan at 12.05pm. He was accompanied by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali arrived at the Balai Penghadapan at 12.37pm to pay their respects.

They were followed by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, and Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah of Selangor, both of whom arrived at 12.51pm.

Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah arrived at 1pm.

Present were the Sultanah's brother, the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan Tuanku Ja'afar and the Tengku Ampuan of Negri Sembilan Tuanku Najihah.

The day began with Sultanah Bahiyah's coffin being carried from Istana Cegar located in the Anak Bukit palace complex to the nearby Balai Penghadapan.

Thousands thronged the hall between 9am and noon to pay their respects.

The stairways were clogged with people from all walks of life and the traffic of people to the hall stalled many times as the huge crowd squeezed into the narrow passages of Istana Anak Bukit.

Palace officials instructed members of the public to recite verses from the Quran while walking past Sultanah Bahiyah's coffin.

At 1.12pm, Sultanah Bahiyah's coffin, draped in her personal standard, was carried out of the Balai Penghadapan by 12 pall-bearers to the tune of Raja Berangkat (The Royal's Departure) played by nobat performers.

A 73-gun salute, with one cannon shot fired to mark each year of the Sultanah's life, was sounded by the 41st Battery of the Sixth Malay Regiment based in Sungai Petani to mark the departure of the procession from Istana Anak Bukit to the Langgar Royal Mausoleum.

The procession was flanked by a royal guard consisting of members of the 2nd Malay regiment from the Sungai Ara camp.

The procession passed Lebuhraya Darul Aman, Jalan Sultanah and Jalan Langgar, accompanied by the nobat.

Sultan of Kelantan Tuanku Ismail Petra and Raja Perempuan Tengku Anis, the Raja Muda of Kedah and the Raja Puan Muda, the Tengku Mahkota of Pahang and Tengku Puan Pahang, Raja Permaisuri of Perak Tuanku Bainon and Malacca Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Syed Shahabuddin Syed Ahmad began arriving at the mausoleum from 1.45pm.

The procession arrived at the mausoleum at 2.45pm led by the Sultan of Kedah and Cik Puan Kedah Haminah Hamidun.

Accompanying them were the Sultan's daughters Tunku Soraya, 43, and her husband, the Raja Kecil Sulung Perak, and their five children; and Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz, 37.

The Yang di-Pertuan Besar Negri Sembilan, the Sultan of Selangor, and the Tengku Mahkota of Johor then arrived, followed by the Sultan of

Brunei.

At 3.05pm, the King and Queen arrived.

The Sultanah was then laid to rest beside the Tunku Panglima Besar, Tunku Yaacob Sultan Abdul Hamid, the Sultan of Kedah's uncle. The two graves are located in the same row as that of first Prime Minister and the Sultan of Kedah's uncle, Tengku Abdul Rahman Putra.

While the coffin was lowered, the nobat performers played the Raja Beradu (The Royal's Repose).

Kedah Mufti Datuk Syeikh Hasbullah Abdul Halim then read the talqin, followed by a recital of the tahlil led by Syariah Court judge Datuk Syeikh Jusoh Yahaya.

Kedah religious council president Syeikh Kassim Saad then led the congregation in reciting the doa.

The Sultan sprinkled scented water and flower petals on the grave of the Sultanah followed by his daughters.

The Sultan of Selangor and the Sultan of Brunei sat on each side of the Sultan of Kedah, providing him with quiet words of comfort and support. Other members of royalty who arrived earlier in the afternoon to pay their respects included the Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin; Sultanah of Johor, Sultanah Zanariah Tunku Ahmad; and, Tengku Mahkota of Johor Tunku Ismail Ibrahim.

Present were Penang Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas who was accompanied by Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, and Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam.

Other Menteris Besar present to accompany the Malay Rulers or their representatives from their respective States were Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim and Terengganu Menteri Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang.

Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat arrived later.

Kedah state executive councillors and MPs also turned up to pay their last respects.

Also present were Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo and Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai who was accompanied by Kedah Police Chief Datuk Supian Amat.