

06/07/2003

Umno stalwart Tun Sulaiman dies at 83

UMNO'S longest-serving permanent chairman Tun Sulaiman Ninam Shah (picture) died of leukaemia at the Pantai Medical Centre here at 5.15am yesterday. He was 83.

He had been warded for more than two months for treatment.

Sulaiman was Umno permanent chairman for the last 28 years and during his term had never failed to attend the party's general assembly.

He leaves a wife, Toh Puan Rose Othman, nine children - three daughters and six sons - 15 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was among those who paid their last respects yesterday, described Sulaiman, who joined Umno in 1946, as almost a party institution.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, arrived at the Petaling Jaya home of Intaan Rogayah, one of Sulaiman's daughters, at 9.30am.

His body was brought to Intaan's house from the medical centre before it was taken to Muar for burial.

In an interview with Bernama last month, Sulaiman advised Umno members to remain united and give their undivided support to the party leadership and be always loyal to the party.

"Umno members should also never sideline the party veterans as they are the people who had for years fought for Malay rights," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Sulaiman led a full life and was working practically until his last days.

"He was almost an institution in Umno as the longest-serving permanent chairman of the party," he said.

The Prime Minister said Sulaiman had done a great service to Umno and the party greatly valued it.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Sulaiman's death was a big loss to Umno.

He said Sulaiman was a dedicated Umno member who was committed to the party and was involved in the party's struggle since its inception.

"Umno has lost a member who was well liked and respected by all. He was a capable man who proved his capabilities during his tenure as Umno's permanent chairman."

Abdullah, who is Umno deputy president, said this after launching the Multimedia Super Corridor Golf Tournament 2003 at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club here yesterday.

He said Sulaiman's contributions to the party were invaluable.

Abdullah said the Malay business fraternity, too, would miss him very much as Sulaiman was an active businessman who was involved in the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce from the beginning.

"I wish to extend my condolences to Sulaiman's family," said Abdullah who attended the funeral in Muar.

He said Umno had lost a veteran party leader who had also contributed immensely to the nation and the business community.

He was buried at the Bakri Muslim cemetery.