

PAS spiritual leader Nik Aziz dies at 84
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PAS venerated spiritual leader and former Kelantan menteri besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat has passed away after a long bout of illness.

Party information chief Mahfuz Omar said he passed away at his home in Pulau Melaka, Kota Bharu at 9.40pm.

The 84-year-old Chempaka assemblyperson was suffering from prostate cancer.

Nik Aziz, who has been a PAS member for close to five decades, leaves behind wife, Tuan Sabariah Tuan Ishak and 10 children.

One of his sons, Nik Mohamad Abduh is a PAS politician and member of Parliament for Pasir Mas.

"With God's will, the angels came to accompany my father's soul to meet his Maker at 9.40pm tonight.

"May he rest in peace next to Allah," Nik Abduh said.

Funeral prayers (solat jenazah) will be at 10am tomorrow at Masjid Tok Guru next to his home.

Supporters arrive

Hundreds of supporters have started flocking to his home to pay their last respects with more expected to arrive.

In immediate response, the Pakatan Rakyat leadership council announced that its scheduled meeting tomorrow is postponed to a later date.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak stopped midway in his speech at a function to announce Nik Aziz's passing. He also tweeted on the matter.

Educated in Arabic and Islamic jurisprudence in Egypt's prestigious Al-Azhar University, Nik Aziz was a respected religious scholar and leader among the Muslim community.

He won the Kelantan Hilir (now Pengkalan Chepa) parliamentary by-election in 1967, the same year he joined PAS.

He was instrumental in reviving PAS' political fortunes and led the party to recapture power in Kelantan in 1990, ending 12 years of BN rule.

Nik Aziz was subsequently installed as the state's menteri besar and served for 23 years before retiring in 2013.

The Kelantan Syariah Criminal Code Enactment II 1993, a hudud legislation, was introduced under his rule but never enforced due to opposition from the federal government.

Nik Aziz also played an important role in bridging the gap between PAS and its ideologically different Pakatan Rakyat partners PKR and DAP after the 2008 general election.

Cracks appeared in Pakatan after Nik Aziz's retirement and his passing could see the fissures widen.

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