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PRIME NEWS

Thousands attend Tok Guru's funeral

UNITED IN GRIEF:

People of all races, faiths, political parties mourn loss of revered leader

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THE passing of Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat left an indelible mark on the nation as Malaysia mourned the loss of one of its illustrious sons.

So palpable was the love and respect for the man, fondly referred to as Tok Guru, that the outpouring of condolences and well-wishes to his family transcended political beliefs, race and religion.

Emotions, too, ran high as thousands jostled to pay their last respects in Pulau Melaka yesterday.

Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang was overcome with emotion while leading the *solat jannah* in a mosque a stone's throw

away from the former menteri besar's home.

"He was a teacher to us all... not only to Muslims but non-Muslims as well. On behalf of Pas, I would like to thank all quarters for their messages of condolence.

"The presence of the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Najib Razak), cabinet members and visitors from other races showed that they respected him despite their differences," he said in his address to the crowd moments before performing prayers.

Nik Aziz's son, Nik Mohamad Abdul, was visibly touched by the turnout, including by the scores of non-Muslims at his father's funeral.

The Pasir Mas parliamentarian then instructed the party's unformed body, Unit Amal, to help keep the funeral process in order and make way for visiting dignitaries.

On the night of Nik Aziz's death, Najib was interrupted half-way during his speech at Berjaya Times Square Hotel upon being informed

of the news. He was said to have paused for a moment and asked the audience to recite prayers for Nik Aziz.

At 9.30am yesterday, Najib arrived to pay his last respects and those present quickly made way for him to meet Nik Abdul. Whispers were heard and many nodded in agreement that respect goes beyond political differences.

It was among the rarest of occasions that leaders across the political divide have put aside their differences. All agreed that Nik Aziz was an exemplary individual.

A broadcast journalist was heard narrating the life of Tok Guru, whom he said held Friday sermons in the wee hours without fail, until in recent years.

"But today (Friday) is different. He is no longer around to impart his words of wisdom to masses, like he always did. I can feel that despite the heat, the sky is gloomy," said the journalist.



Datuk Seri Najib Razak arriving in Pulau Melaka, Kelantan to pay his last respects to Pas spiritual leader **Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat** yesterday. (Inset) **Najib and Nik Aziz** sharing a light moment at the launch of an East Coast Economic Region project in Pekan, Pahang, in 2011. Pix by Fathil Asri and Bernama

The roads leading to the home of the revered Pas leader were filled, shoulder to shoulder, with vehicles for 2km as many people made their way to pay their last respects.

A gridlock formed at all roads leading to his home, as police closed the road at the junction of Jalan Panji and Pulau Melaka and Kota Jemal to traffic.

There was even talk of those who prayed for Nik Aziz at several fuel stations as they could not reach Pulau Melaka on time.

The scene was emotionally astounding, as pallbearers shouldered the casket, which was draped in a large, black suede cloth adorned with Quranic verses, headed towards the cemetery.

Nik Aziz, the face of Pas for so long and a religious teacher to many, will undoubtedly be missed.

Article not ours, says BH

KUALA LUMPUR: Berita Harian yesterday lodged a police report after a website, which used an address similar to the company's name, published an irresponsible article questioning the burial of Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

The article, titled "Wajarkah Nik Aziz dikebumikan di tanah perkuburan Islam?" was published on berita-harian.net.

Berita Harian management said it lodged the report to avoid being linked to the article. Its real website is bharian.com.my.



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though the Chempaka by-election would be held first.

On the Permatang Pauh by-election, he said it depended on whether its member of parliament, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, would file an appeal for pardon to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"The constitution allows Anwar to make an appeal within 14 days from the date of his conviction on Feb 10. If there is no appeal after 14 days, then we will expect to receive a letter

from the Dewan Rakyat Speaker."

Yesterday, Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia said opposition leader Anwar would lose his Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat upon expiry of the 14 days, under Article 48 Clause 4(a) of the Federal Constitution.

He said if Anwar filed a petition for pardon within the 14 days, then his disqualification would only take effect if the petition decision goes against him, according to Article 48 Clause 4(c) of the Federal Constitution. **Bernama**