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PM'S TRIBUTE TO TAN SRI ADENAN SATEM

'Apai Besar' embodies 1Malaysia spirit, says Najib

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KUALA LUMPUR: The late Tan Sri Adenan Satem was described as a true 1Malaysia figure.

Adenan, 72, died of heart complications at the Sarawak General Hospital's Heart Centre in Kota Samarahan, Kuching, at 1.24pm on Wednesday.

"His cries of 'ooh haa', which means *I love Sarawak*, still resonates in my ears," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said.

In a heartfelt tribute to Adenan on his website, NajibRazak.com, Najib described him as a leader that embodied the 1Malaysia spirit and was able to unite all races under one roof.

Recalling a function he attended with the Sarawak chief minister in 2015, Najib said at the event where most of those present were from the Chinese community, Adenan, fondly

known as Tok Nan, was able to converse in Hokkien.

"Tok Nan could effortlessly leave the crowd in stitches while announcing policies for the people of Sarawak related to education and cost of living.

"I'm certain that any community in Sarawak, be it the Dayaks, Chinese, Malays or Kelabits, has high regard and affection for their *Apai Besar* (big leader)."

Adenan, Najib added, was a leader that he respected, who was firm and responsible in carrying out his duties as chief minister.

Najib said Adenan constantly

brought up issues faced by the people of Sarawak.

"I am proud that the relation between the Federal Government and the Sarawak state government was at its peak under Tok Nan's leadership."

Najib said the experience of campaigning during the Sarawak state election last year was fresh in his mind, where Adenan led the election machinery and secured a landslide victory.

"He was the political tsunami, a blue wave or what some would say, the Adenan factor."

Adenan was someone who did not

easily concede defeat when faced with challenges, said Najib, including during the helicopter tragedy that killed their friends during the election period.

"I remember there were many discussions between Adenan and myself to boost the spirit of the party machinery and election strategies after the helicopter tragedy to ensure a big win for Barisan Nasional."

He also said Adenan had always placed the interests of the people above his own and many transformations he implemented made the people love and believe in the BN-led government.

Najib said he had lost a people-oriented leader who was tireless in fighting for the fate of the people of Sarawak.

"I have lost a dear friend who was close to me and my wife.

"I have witnessed his career during difficult and good times and I will always remember him as a loyal friend, a friend very close to my heart.

"His passing is a great loss to the party and he has left a big space to be filled," added Najib.

He said Adenan's contributions were immense and would be enshrined in history and be remembered by all, especially the people of Sarawak.

"Indeed, we have all lost a credible leader who chose to serve the party and the people until his last breath.

"I pray that Allah will place Allahyarham Tok Nan under his protection, Al-Fatihah."

I'm certain that any community in Sarawak, be it the Dayaks, Chinese, Malays or Kelabits, has high regard and affection for their 'Apai Besar' (big leader).