

Forever remembered as a noble soul and true statesman

PETALING JAYA: Condolences and heartfelt tributes have poured in following the demise of former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, affectionately known as Pak Lah.

His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, expressed condolences over the fifth prime minister's passing.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who described Pak Lah as a friend, said it was still fresh in his mind when he last visited Abdullah, who was in a frail state.

"But the second our hands touched, his blurry eyes shone with care and an unwavering serenity. In the tumultuous world of politics, Pak Lah had always been the one who provided calm.

"He accepted me graciously, even though we were once on opposite sides of the political arena. That was how big of a soul this statesman was," Anwar said in a Facebook post.

With his Islam Hadhari approach, he said Abdullah bridged the gap between advancement

and development with values.

"Under his leadership, we witnessed reformation in the judiciary, transparency in administration and the strengthening of institutions. However, aside from all his achievements, Pak Lah taught us humanity in leadership.

"He led with a face that was never angry, hands that never clung to power and a voice that was never raised despite being tested repeatedly.

"To Tun Jeanne's family, son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin and the rest of his big family, I convey my sincerest condolences from the bottom of my heart. The whole nation is saddened by this loss," Anwar said.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof said Abdullah's leadership based on Islam Hadhari and emphasis on human capital development throughout his tenure would forever be remembered.

"His passing is a big loss to the people and the country. May his soul be blessed and placed among the righteous," he said.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Abdullah would be remembered as a statesman with a noble soul, steady in leadership and always putting the people's needs as a priority.

Ahmad Zahid said during the early days of his career, Abdullah offered him opportunities and shared priceless advice with him.

"His guidance and belief in me became among the core pillars that shaped who I am and my direction in life today," he said.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong said Abdullah left a lasting imprint on Malaysia, and his legacy would live on in the hearts of Malaysians.

"I am deeply saddened by Abdullah's passing. Malaysia has lost a true statesman.

"Tun Abdullah was a man of grace, humility and deep conviction.

"He led with a calm strength and always believed in unity, moderation and compassion," said Dr Wee.

Sending his condolences to

Abdullah's family, he wished that they be granted the strength to go through this difficult time.

MIC president Tan Sri SA Vigneswaran said Abdullah would always be cherished as a statesman who was calm and noble in his leadership.

"His contribution to the country is huge, and in the context of the Indian community, he has never sidelined our voice and the community's needs.

"His attentiveness was shown through inclusive approaches, fair policies and readiness to listen with an open heart," he said, adding that MIC conveyed its sincerest condolences to Abdullah's family.

Former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, in a Facebook post, expressed sadness when informed of Abdullah's demise.

Najib described Pak Lah as always willing to guide, give advice and pointers.

"In politics and administration, Pak Lah was someone with integrity. His leadership was not just based on accountability but also

he prioritised excellence," he said.

Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade) chairman Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican expressed his condolences to Abdullah's family, saying the nation lost a renowned statesman.

"I lost someone who I deeply respected," said Reezal, who had served as Abdullah's political secretary.

Bersatu and Perikatan Nasional secretary-general Datuk Seri Azmin Ali said Malaysia had lost a statesman, who had developed the country and shaped the identity of the people with moderate and pure qualities.

"May his soul be placed in heaven with the full blessings of Allah," he said on Instagram.

PAS secretary-general Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan also extended the party's condolences.

"Pak Lah's legacy will remain in the folds of the country's history and in the memory of the people as a leader who was honest, a gentleman, dignified and respected by all," he said.