



Eight army personnel getting ready to carry the casket to the mausoleum following completion of the funeral prayers. -**AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN**

Nation mourns passing of Tun Abdullah

> Thousands pay tribute to Malaysia's fifth prime minister, known for his calm leadership and legacy of moderation

■ **BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Tens of thousands gathered at the National Mosque yesterday to mourn the passing of Malaysia's fifth prime minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

A solemn atmosphere filled the mosque as Malaysians from all walks of life came together to pay their final respects to the elder statesman, who passed away peacefully on Monday at the age of 85.

Affectionately known as Pak Lah, Abdullah was admitted to the National Heart Institute on Sunday morning due to breathing difficulties. He died the following day.

The main prayer hall of the National Mosque, which accommodates up to 15,000 people, was filled to capacity as mourners performed the *solat jenazah* (funeral prayer).

His remains were laid to rest at the Heroes' Mausoleum near the mosque at 1.53pm, following *Zohor* prayers.

Members of the public began arriving as early as 8am.

Those waiting outside the mosque were promptly ushered into the prayer hall to offer prayers and condolences.

The Sultan of Terengganu Sultan Mizan

Zainal Abidin, who served as the 13th Yang di-Pertuan Agong during Abdullah's premiership, arrived at 11.39am, accompanied by his son Tengku Setia Mahkota Raja Tengku Muhammad Mud'az.

Former prime ministers, including Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak, also attended the funeral.

Mahathir was accompanied by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and their son Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir.

"He took over as prime minister after I resigned. And when he became prime minister, he led the 2004 general election with one of the most remarkable victories in history, securing 90% of the vote for the government. That was the greatest success," Mahathir said.

Najib, currently incarcerated, was granted permission by the court to attend the funeral.

He arrived at the mosque at about 10.30am under heavy police escort.

Among the other notable attendees were former premiers Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari, Works Deputy Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan, former Selangor menteri besar Datuk Seri Azmin Ali, former Perak menteri besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu, former

cabinet minister Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar, Malacca Governor Tun Mohd Ali Rustam and Sabah Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tan Sri Musa Aman.

Singapore former prime minister Lee Hsien Loong, now senior minister, was also present to bid farewell.

Lee had served as premier during Abdullah's tenure between 2003 and 2009.

Guests were received at the mosque entrance by Abdullah's son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin, who appeared sombre throughout the proceedings.

Known for his calm demeanour and moderate leadership style, Abdullah succeeded Mahathir in 2003 and led Barisan Nasional (BN) to its most resounding electoral victory in 2004, securing 198 out of 219 parliamentary seats.

His administration's strong anti-corruption stance was seen as a key factor in restoring public trust in BN.

However, in the 2008 general election, the Opposition denied BN its long-held two-thirds majority in Parliament for the first time in history.

Abdullah stepped down in 2009, paving the way for Najib to take over as prime minister.

Born in Penang, Abdullah withdrew from public life following the 2008-2013 parliamentary term to spend more time with his family.

He returned to the public eye in 2023 when it was revealed that he had been diagnosed with dementia.