

PM leads poignant eulogy for Ghafar

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says Malaysia has lost a statesman and a national hero in former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Ghafar Baba.

"Ghafar's immense contributions and good deeds were invaluable to the community and there is no substitute for a leader like him," he said when tabling a motion of condolences to Ghafar's family members in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Ghafar, 81, died of heart, lung and kidney complications in the Gleneagles Intan Medical Centre on Jalan Ampang at 7.34am on Sunday.

Abdullah said Ghafar was a statesman and a patriot who spent most of his time serving the people and nation, in good as

At the Dewan Rakyat

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well as difficult times.

Abdullah said Ghafar's loyalty was towards his struggle for the people, and he had always been consistent in serving the country, whether he was holding a position in the government and party, or as an ordinary member without a post.

"Ghafar continued to give his support and was loyal to the party and the government, and was ready to give his views and advice when needed.

"The nation and the people have lost a statesman by the name of Abdul Ghafar bin Baba who had served as a member of

this honorable Dewan (Rakyat) for 35 years.

"The Dewan extends its highest appreciation to the late Tun Ghafar's contributions, good deeds, service and devotion for the nation and the people," he said.

The prime minister said the country and the people were also grateful to Ghafar's family for their sacrifices in allowing Ghafar to dedicate the greater part of his life to serve the nation and the people.

"On behalf of the government and the people of Malaysia, I am extending my deepest

condolences to the late Tun Ghafar's family. Our sadness and sympathies go to his family members," he said.

Abdullah said Ghafar had always shown his maturity and gave a balanced view of sensitive issues related to religion, race and culture.

"The late Tun Ghafar is one of the national leaders who accepted the reality and the racial composition of the country, which comprises various religions, races, culture and languages, and was always the stabiliser, including in resolving sensitive issues involving other ethnic groups.

"In fact, when MCA was faced with a leadership crisis in 1985, the late Tun Ghafar, despite being a non-Chinese, was accepted to lead the party (MCA) during the transitional period," he said.

Abdullah said among the Malay community, Ghafar was known as the voice of the Malays and as their spokesman as he was always sensitive to the needs of the people, especially the average and the poor.

"The late Tun Ghafar, throughout his entire life, was a source of light for the Malays. He was born into a poor family but poverty did not prevent him from achieving success," Abdullah said.

"In fact, poverty was the source of his strength ..."