

INDIA : Former President A P J Abdul Kalam dies

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Shillong: Former President A P J Abdul Kalam today died in a Shillong hospital following a sudden illness.

Kalam (84) took ill at a function here and was rushed to the hospital, M Kharkrang, SP Khasi Hills, said. The former President collapsed during a lecture at the Indian Institute of Management here at around 6.30pm and was taken to the hospital.

Meghalaya Governor V Shanmughanathan and Chief Secretary P B O Warjri visited Bethany hospital where Kalam has been admitted.

APJ Abdul Kalam's family wants last rites to be held at Rameswaram

Chennai: The last rites of former president A.P.J. Abdul Kalam would most probably be held in his native town Rameswaram as per the wishes of the family members, said a senior official at Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram district.

"A large number of relatives, friends, well wishers and common people have gathered at Kalam's house at Rameswaram," A.P.J.M.K. Sheik Saleem, the former president's grandson told IANS over phone.

Saleem is the son of Kalam's brother A.P.J.M. Maraikayar.

"The central government normally would consider positively the wishes of the family members on matters like this. The government is yet to confirm the date on which the former president's body would arrive at Rameswaram," the official told IANS on Tuesday.

Temple town Rameswaram is around 600 km from here and falls under the Ramanathapuram district.

Kalam was born in Rameswaram and spent his poverty stricken childhood days.

According to the official, the central government normally would consider the family members wishes for conduct of last rites.

The central government is to inform the state government on the date on which Kalam's body would be sent to Rameswaram.

He said the family members are also discussing on the site where Kalam's last rites could be conducted.

According to the official, the administration is gearing up to make necessary arrangements as thousands of people would assemble at Rameswaram to pay homage to Kalam.

Kalam died on Monday evening in Shillong in Meghalaya.

He collapsed at the Indian Institute of Management-Shillong while giving a lecture to the students on "Livable Planet".

"Whether a person is related or not, Kalam is a good teacher to all. He taught human and family values. I have worked with in some of his projects for five years," Saleem said.

According to him, a large number of people have assembled at Kalam's house at Rameswaram.

- IANS, INDIA TV