

*JPNN/ Rameswaram| (TN) / Jul 30, 2015/ The mortal remains of former President A P J Abdul Kalam, who died on Monday, were taken from his ancestral house to the local mosque ahead of the funeral as thousands*

*of mourners young and old poured into the island town to pay their last respects Thursday . Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi and a host of other dignitaries, including and chief ministers of some states, will be taking part in the last rites to be held around 11 AM after 'Namaz-e-Janaza'. The body of 83-year-old Kalam, who passed away in Shillong on Monday, was taken from the house around 9.30 AM to the mosque by the personnel of three services with the casket covered with traditional green shawl. At the mosque, the Aalin or the chief priest would read out special prayer and speak about the former president, who grew up from this island. Later, it would be taken to the place of burial where prayers would be offered again. The body of the "Missile Man" was brought to his house on the narrow Pallivasal Street around 10 PM last night after lying in state and left in the privacy of his family till this morning. Thousands of mourners kept pouring through the night by various transport including buses, trains and boats to attend the last rites and many of them even slept on the roads last night. Shops, business establishments and hotels remained shut in the town and throughout Tamil Nadu as a mark of respect to the late leader fondly called the "People's President". Police said tight security arrangements have been made in and around the town and Navy, Coast Guard and marine police personnel deployed in the sea. Tamil Nadu Government has declared a public holiday on Thursday as a mark of respect to Kalam. Several people were seen holding the national tri-colour as they waited in the jam-packed streets around Kalam's house to have a last glimpse of their hero. Many were perched on the terraces of buildings. The burial will be at Peikarumbu here where about 1.5 acre had been allocated for the purpose. Slogans of "Bharat Mata ki jai" rent the air as the body was taken in flower-bedecked carriage to the burial site, about 3.5 km from the mosque, accompanied by the personnel of three services. Kalam's family members, including his eldest sister 99-year-old Mohammed Muthu Meera Lebbai Maraicker accompanied the body. Agency*