

# Jomo Kenyatta passes away

NAIROBI, Aug 22: President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya died in his sleep today at the Indian Ocean port of Mombasa, the official Voice of Kenya radio announced. He was in his late 80's says Reuter.

He became the first President of the former British colony in December, 1964 one year after it was granted independence and had ruled Kenya since then.

The radio said he died peacefully in his sleep at 3.30 a.m. (00.30 GMT) at the presidential residence in Mombasa.

Under the constitution, Vice-President Daniel Arap Moi becomes acting head of state for three months, in which time a new President will be elected.

Kenyatta was one of the leaders of the Mau Mau rebellion against British colonial rule in the 1950's.

The Mau Mau insurgency, which forced the British to declare a state of emergency in Kenya, cost 13,547 lives. Nearly all those killed were Africans.

He remained a towering figure among black African leaders by his example of turning Kenya into a stable and prosperous independent country.

To his people he was revered as a father figure.

To Africans generally he was respected as an elder statesman with an influential and moderating voice.

## LIFE SKETCH

President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, who died in his sleep today in his late 80s, held a unique place among African leaders who led their countries to independence from the colonial powers.

He started the fight for the freedom of black African countries and everything he said about the colonial system, his reasons for fighting it and his methods for doing so, were copied by those who came afterwards.

In the 1920s, when nationalism in the African colonies was virtually unknown, Kenyatta was already advancing the concept of people's right to self-determination and freedom to

foster their own cultural heritage.

In the days of his early political struggle against the British in Kenya, he was in the vanguard not only of nationalism but also of pan-Africanism. As an eminent anti-colonialist, he undoubtedly attracted more hatred and denigration from whites than any other African leader.

Once a sick orphan Kenyatta was nursed back to health at a



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Church of Scotland mission. The mission doctors performed an operation for a spinal disorder which could have killed him.

He took the Christian religion and learned to read and write in five years at the mission but later he turned on the church, criticising its role in helping to establish colonialism.

He once remarked, "when the missionaries arrived, the Africans had the land and the missionaries and the Bible. They taught us to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened then they had the land and we had the Bible."

Kenyatta spent 16 years in England from 1930 broadening his horizons as a scholar and politician before going back to Kenya to take up the independence struggle.

PTI reports from New Delhi: The national flag of India will fly at half mast today (Wednesday) in Delhi as a mark of respect to the memory of President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya.