The Royal Funeral Ceremony for late King-Father Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk kicked off with sadness and tearfulness of the Cambodian people, royal families and leaders.

The King-Father's Body has been being moved from the Royal Palace to the cremation site at the open square of Veal Preah Merhu, in front of the National Museum, next to the Royal Palace in a 2,000-meter long procession that will march on 6,000 meters long.

The funeral procession is composed of 11 sections and the royal coffin is in the 9th one. The procession will pass through Techo Yat's and Techo Meas' statues, Wat Phnom, Preah Sisowath High School, and the Independence Monument where 90 Buddhist monks will be waiting to chant and pray for the soul of King-Father at each stopover.

The ceremony also started with the first 101 rounds of 105 mm-artillery firing.

According to the schedule, the King-Father's Body will be kept at Veal Preah Merhu for three days before being cremated on Feb. 4. During this period, people, especially the prisoners who will be released to mark the Royal Cremation Ceremony, will be allowed to pay respect to the

late King-Father.

On the 5th day of the Royal Funeral Ceremony, there will be the Royal Remains-Gathering Ceremony, while the 6th and 7th days will be for the procession of bringing Royal Remains to Chaktomuk River, in front of the Royal Palace, and to Preah Keo Morokat Pagoda, located in the Royal Palace's compound.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, many foreign leaders will attend the upcoming Royal Cremation Ceremony. They are H.E. Mr. Jia Qinglin, Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, French Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Jean-Marc Ayrault, Vietnamese Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Thai Prime Minister H.E. Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, Lao Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Thongsing Thammavong, Vice President of the Philippines H.E. Mr. Jejomar C. Binay, His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino of Japan, Singapore Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance H.E. Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Brunei Darussalam's Minister of Development Honorable Pehin Dato Suyoi Haji Osman, Indonesia's Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs H.E. Air Chief Marshall Djoko Suyanto, Myanmar's Senior Union Minister of the President Office H.E. Mr. Tin Naing Thein, the Republic of Korea's Presidential Chief of Staff H.E. Mr. Ha Kum-Loul, Australia's Lieutenant General H.E. Mr. John Sanderson, India's Minister of Human Resources Development H.E. Dr. M. Mangapati Pallam Raju, Malaysia's Senator and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department H.E. Dr. Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon, and Canada's Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Honorable Deepak Obhrai.

Cambodia has recently announced the 2nd official mourning period for the late King-Father to be held from Feb. 1-7. During the mourning period, the national flags must be flying at 1/3 below the top of the mast across the country, while entertainment activities including TV and radio entertainment programs have to be suspended.

King-Father Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk passed away on Oct. 15, 2012 at 01:20 am (local time in Phnom Penh) in Beijing, China at the age of 90 from natural causes.

Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk was born on Oct. 31, 1922. He was the only son of HRH Prince Norodom Suramarit and HRH Princess Sisowath Kossomak Nearirath Serey Vatthana.

He became the King of the Kingdom of Cambodia in April 1941 and led Cambodia for the full independence from France in 1953.

In 1955, Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk abdicated to his father and founded the Sangkum Reastr Niyum (SRN), a country development movement. It won a great victory in the legislative election. At that time, Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk became the Prime Minister of Cambodia, and head of state of Cambodia in 1960 after the death of his father.

On Mar. 18, 1970 during the official visit to the ex-USSR, late King-Father was ousted from the power by a Coup d'Etat. Then he became the President of the Cambodian resistance (FUNK).

In April 1975, Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk became head of state of Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge regime), but he resigned in 1976.

From the fall of the Democratic Kampuchea in Jan. 7, 1979 to 1990, Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk stayed out of the country and returned back in 1991 and became the King of Cambodia in 1993 until he abdicated in October 2004.

After the abdication, he often stayed in China for his medical treatment until he passed away.