

19/05/2003

Sambanthan remembered

Balan Moses; Ramlan Said; Lim Chee Wei

THE Tamil newspapers remembered the 24th death anniversary of former MIC president and first post-Merdeka Indian Cabinet minister Tun V.T. Sambanthan yesterday.

Tamil Nesan carried a compilation of tributes to the Indian leader from leading personalities at that time such as former Lord President Tun Mohamed Suffian Hashim, former prime ministers Tengku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj and Tun Hussein Onn, and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

P. Arunasalam quoted from the experiences with Sambanthan which the leading personalities had cited in their messages of condolence.

Malaysia Nanan's contribution came in the form of poems from readers celebrating the life and times of Sambanthan, who was part of the team led by the Tengku which went to London to negotiate independence from Britain.

The tributes were accompanied by a photograph of garlanded and youthful Sambanthan, presumably from the 1950s.

Sambanthan died on May 18, 1979, several years after relinquishing the party leadership to his deputy Tan Sri V. Manikavasagam, who was succeeded by Samy Vellu.

The weekend did not see any particular issue of importance to the Indian community highlighted by the newspapers, which left the front page largely to the peace talks between the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil Tigers and the spate of bomb blasts in Saudi Arabia and Morocco.

Malaysia Nanan embellished its front page yesterday with a large close-up of Hindi actress Aiswarya Rai at Cannes, France, where she is a member of the film festival's panel of judges.

Tamil Nesan's letters to the editor yesterday carried a missive from a reader who was taken up by a picture in the daily recently showing Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, greeting delegates to the MIC general assembly with the traditional Indian hand gesture.

T. Baskaran commented that this was very thoughtful of the Prime Minister and his deputy.