

**Najib upstaged Lord Muruga this Thaipusam**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**January 24, 2011**

I was at the annual Thaipusam festival this year to fulfill my vows, and as usual my chosen place to pay my penance was Batu Caves. As the country is asking itself as to whom we can trust to govern this beloved nation of ours, I am saddened to see that what the BN government preaches about 1Malaysia and unity is nothing but a mere propaganda exercise to continue to pull wool over the people's eyes.

I note that once again the Batu Caves temple committee had erected a large cut-out of PM Najib which was put right at the front of the temple's compound, making it the first thing that one sees before one enters the temple compound.

When this was last done, the issue had been raised saying that this act of erecting a large cut-out should not be done in a place of worship where the deity of that place of worship should reign supreme.

But again as usual, being as thick-skinned as they can be, the temple authorities this time saw it fit to erect such a large cut-out in the name of supporting the PM and his message of 1Malaysia.

What of putting the people first as is the PM's motto? The PM does not seem to lead by example when it comes to respecting other religions.

The PM ought to have the experience to know that it is very disrespectful to have a large cut-out of himself placed in a place of worship where it should be the supreme lord of that place that should take prominence. Even if the temple authorities were ignorant and only wanted to show their blind allegiance as usual when it comes to Indian politics in Malaysia, the PM should have known better.

Instead of seeing the large statute of Lord Muruga overlooking the entire area, all the kavadis and devotees on their spiritual journey had to look at the cut-out of PM Najib instead.

This brings us to the issue of the Indian electorate of the country; many are still very emotional and are unable to see that if they do not change their voting pattern, they will become voters with no worth tomorrow.

When we see the Bangladeshi-Malay, the Pakistani-Malay, Nepali-Malay, African-Malay generation of voters take their place tomorrow in the electoral rolls, the Indian voter will become insignificant.

Therefore the best way forward for the Indians is to be politically independent and to co-operate with the party that is sincere in helping us. Because despite the fact that the Najib cut-out was placed more prominently than Lord Murugan, there will still be many ignorant Indians who will support that move and play along.

For the 31 years that Samy Vellu had been the president of MIC, there was never an incident where there was a report of his cut-out being put in Batu Caves during Thaipusam.

As the leader of MIC, he knows that such a publicity stunt is a definite no-no because it shows utter disrespect to the main deity of the temple.

### **Mutual respect too much to ask?**

The Malays talk about the non-Malays being disrespectful of mosques and suraus, where the MP for Serdang had been their favourite target for speaking in a surau in a baju kebaya and then doing aerobics with her constituents near a mosque dressed in loose track pants and T-shirt.

But at Batu Caves during Thaipusam, there were large numbers of Malay police and Rela personnel who seem to know nothing about the Hindu religion, who are put in charge of directing kavadis - some were even seen wearing their boots while at the altar of the temple at the hill top.

Isn't this being insensitive to the feelings of the Hindus in Malaysia and disrespecting Hindusim? Why are Malay police and Rela personnel who know nothing about Hinduism being asked to form this security armada in and around Batu Caves during our annual Hindu pilgrimage?

Many of these personnel even brought and consumed non-vegetarian meals whilst in the confines of the temple, where non-vegetarian food, in particular meat, is forbidden. Imagine some Chinese Rela guards were to consume pork noodles whilst on duty near a mosque on some Muslim religious festival, surely that would not be tolerated by the Malays.

The worst part of the whole security arrangement was that there was a group of at least 20 Malay trainee female nurses who were all holed up at the hill top temple just sitting close together looking at one another and not seeming to lift a finger to help the devotees who were fainting due to exhaustion.

It was not hard to guess their reluctance to help, it could obviously be seen that they were not very happy to be posted there from the looks on their faces. They didn't appear to like the crowd and were not very comfortable handling Indian patients.

But on the whole, the Indians do not seem to want to press for change even though the current federal administration is just closing an eye to the atrocities being committed by their police force on Indians in police lockups.

The only way for all this to change is for the Indian community to ensure that every one of them is a registered voter and faithfully does his/her part by voting at every general and by-election, to register objection against discrimination, injustice, inequality and racism.

They seem to be determined to introduce 'Interlok' as the literature textbook of choice for upper secondary students, force feeding historical lies on the younger generation without proper research, and if the Indians do not respond via the ballot box, then we may be fast becoming a voiceless community that will eventually fade away.