

M'sians: Simple, patriotic, people's leader

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KUALA LUMPUR: A humble and simple man, patriotic and a people's leader. To those who knew Tun Ghafar Baba, the praises for him were unceasing.

The younger Malaysians, who knew Ghafar from articles written about him, will remember the former deputy prime minister as someone who had contributed at every stage of the nation's growth.

Loh Kam Seng, 64, said Ghafar was a man who never failed to help anyone and would always think of the people and country.

"I have known him for about 30 years. He was a simple and humble man. I would visit him during Hari Raya and he definitely enjoyed his food," said Loh, who was at the National Mosque to pay his last respects.

Ghafar's gardener, Mihat Ali, 65, knew Ghafar as a man of few words.

"As a politician, he seldom had time for himself," said Mi-hat, who had worked for Ghafar for over 40 years.

Yusuf Osman, who stays behind the Tun Ghafar Baba Gallery, said Ghafar was a down-to-earth man.

"Even when he was the Deputy Prime Minister, he would pluck rambutans and hand the fruit over to the neighbours through the fence," said the self-employed Yusof, 40.

The few short meetings ex-soldier S. Kumar had with Ghafar were enough to leave a lasting impression.

"Leaders like him are like generals as they don't die, but just fade away. He will be remembered forever," Kumar said.

T. Bala, former political assistant to trade unionist and DAP veteran V. David who died in July last year, said:

"When David died, he (Ghafar) was the highest-ranking BN leader who attended the funeral and spent the whole day with us despite the political difference."