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Nagaenthran had photos taken in favourite outfit before hanging

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NATION

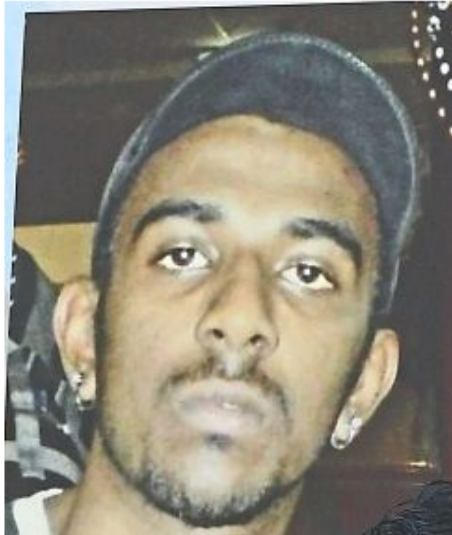
Thursday, 28 Apr 2022



No clemency: People paying tribute at the wake for Nagaenthran during a memorial service in Singapore. — AFP

PETALING JAYA: Dressed in his favourite collared T-shirt, jeans and white sneakers, Nagaenthran Dharmalingam posed for several photographs in a special photoshoot. Hours later, he was executed.

It was one of Nagaenthran last wishes before he was hanged for a drug offence in Singapore, said an activist.



“Rest In Peace, Nagaenthran K. Dharmalingam,” said Singaporean human rights activist Kriestan Han after posting a photo of Nagaenthran in his final photograph alive.

“Before an execution, family members are allowed to buy clothes for the prisoner to wear at a photo shoot.

“The photos are given to the family shortly before or after execution,” Han said in a Facebook post yesterday.

Han said Nageanthran’s brother Navin Kumar had told her it was the condemned man’s favourite outfit.

Human rights lawyer M. Ravi said earlier that a Malaysian funeral parlour had offered to bring Nagaenthran’s remains back.

Relatives gathered at the family house in Taman Indah in Tanjung Rambutan following the news of the execution.

In accepting Nagaethran's sentence with a heavy heart, his eldest sister Sarmila said the family would not be taking any further action.

"He is no longer with us. It is painful but we accept this fate.

"We want to thank everyone in Malaysia and Singapore who have been helping, supporting and praying for Nagaenthran," she told reporters at the family house in Tanjung Rambutan yesterday evening.

Sarmila, 36, said their mother was on the bus when the execution took place.

"She took the bus to Singapore with two relatives, hoping that there might be some last-minute reprieve on his execution.

"Right now, we are trying to get her to talk and eat a little bit," she said, adding that their mother Panchalai Supermaniam was too distraught to speak.

Amnesty International said that another Malaysian, Datchinamurthy Kataiah, is scheduled to be executed in Singapore this Friday, also for a drug-related offence.

However, he has a pending legal challenge in a Singapore court later in May.

"International safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty state that executions may not be carried out pending any appeal or other recourse procedure," said Amnesty International Asia Pacific regional director Erwin van der Borgh.

Nagaenthran, 34, was executed at dawn yesterday after a Singapore court rejected his final appeal against the death sentence imposed for drug trafficking on March 29.

He was detained in 2009 and convicted of trafficking 42.72g of heroin in 2010.

His case drew public attention with local and international appeals against his death sentence, especially because of his intellectual disability.

Among those who called for clemency were British billionaire Richard Branson and actor Stephen Fry who pleaded for Nagaenthran's life to be spared.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah had written to Singapore president Halimah Yaakob seeking clemency for Nagaenthran.

In a related development, Wisma Putra said that Malaysia is open to holding talks with Singapore on the possibility of implementing a prisoner exchange programme in the wake of Nagaenthran's execution.

This comes after letters from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Abdullah were sent to their respective Singaporean counterparts last week, seeking the death sentence against Nagaenthran to be commuted.