

Slain Malaysian Indian lawmaker received death threats: Vellu

Slain Malaysian Indian lawmaker S. Krishnasamy, who was gunned down last Friday, had received death threats but had not taken them seriously, his party chief and Malaysian Works Minister S. Samy Vellu has revealed.

Krishnasamy, member of the Tenggaroh assembly, had told Vellu about the threats before the latter left for India to attend the 6th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas two weeks ago. This was revealed by Vellu Saturday after he attended the funeral of his colleague.

Vellu said: 'I just advised him to take care. That was the most I could say.'

Vellu, who heads the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) - the largest party of ethnic Indians - said Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had contacted him Saturday to assure him that police were tracking down the suspect.

A large number of people attended the funeral despite a heavy downpour, media reports said Sunday.

Krishnasamy was deputy chief of one of the key units of the party.

According to Vellu, such threats were not unusual in politics. However, he could not confirm if the threats were linked to politics or business, The New Straits Times reported Sunday.

Vellu said that he too received 10 to 15 such calls a day from people making all sorts of accusations and threats.

'This time, things got out of hand. Now, there are all sorts of accusations and the people's minds have been poisoned. There are a lot of problems created by people in the Indian community and this is through instigation,' he said.

Media reports have linked Krishnasamy's murder to possible business or political rivalry. A report in The New Straits Times also linked him to a businessman with alleged underworld links.

Vellu said that MIC leaders would not be able to do their work if they lived in fear.

'I meet 750 people each week. If a gunman comes, even I can be shot,' he said, adding that all MIC assemblymen and MPs have been told to be extra cautious.

'We also appeal to the inspector general of police to investigate this case thoroughly as the previous murder of Lunas assemblyman Joe Fernandez in 2000 has yet to be solved,' he said.

Several other murders have also taken place in Penang, he pointed out.

Meanwhile, the police have identified several suspects involved in the murder of Krishnasamy, Deputy Internal Security Minister Datuk Mohd Johari Baharom said.

No arrests have been made so far.

A lone gunman is believed to be behind the murder that media reports said appeared to have been carried with professional precision. One bullet hit Krishnasamy between his two eyes.

Inspector-General of Police Musa Hassan said the police would record Vellu's statement as part of investigations into Krishnasamy's murder.

'We will ask Samy Vellu because we would like to know more about these death threats,' he told media.

Police are looking for a man in his 30s. He is of dark complexion, medium build and about 154 cm tall.

'He was seen fleeing the scene of the crime on a red RXZ motorcycle, with a package in his hand,' the police chief said.

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