

In Memory of

Haji Mohammed Rashid Pierkhan

(10 January 1938 – 13 July 2005)

Managing Director, Rapar Broadcasting Network (RBN)

President, Surinaamse Islamitische Vereniging (SIV)

The late Bro. Haji Mohammed Rashid Pierkhan inherited his business acumen, foresight and love for media work from his father, the late Bro Noer Pierkhan. The foundation for the Pierkhan's media empire was established when Mr. Noer Pierkhan, under the name of *ACME Service*, started a radio programme in Sarinami Urdu on the 10th of March 1957 on *Radio Paramaribo (Rapar)*. This programme soon became very popular. The amount of advertisements received encouraged Mr. Noer Pierkhan to start his own advertising agency, which he did under the name of *First Indian Advertising Agency*.

Bro. Rashid Pierkhan went through a very difficult time when his father suddenly passed away in 1966 at the age of 48. In that same year, he also lost his mother, his grandfather and his grandmother. As a result, Bro. Rashid Pierkhan, who was a Civil Servant and at the time was also studying at the Suriname Law School, had to shoulder the addition burden of running the business as well. Consequently he resigned from the Government Service, left his studies at the Law School, and joined *Rapar*.

He was supported very well by Mr. Wilfred Lionarons, Director of *Rapar* in those days. In 1974, Bro. Rashid Pierkhan purchased the rest of the shares of the company and, with his business skills, succeeded in expanding the company.

Bro. Rashid Pierkhan did not like publicity and preferred working behind the scenes, from where he could better manage and monitor his company. He did some radio talk shows, amongst which was the very popular *Kal Aaj aur Kal* (Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow), a programme with very high listening ratings and active participation of large number of listeners from the public. .

In addition to the electronic media (radio and television, with several frequencies in Paramaribo and Nickerie), Bro. Pierkhan started the broadcasting information and public views via the written media. Among the popular publications can be mentioned, daily *Dagblad* and weekly *Bollywood Masala*.

He was also successful in the social, educational and cultural fields. As director of *Cultural and Art Promotion*, he invited several leading foreign artists to Suriname and was able to promote and strengthen cultural bonds of Suriname with Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and India.

Besides his other activities, he managed to spend considerable time in his hobby, undertaking small-scale agriculture projects.

In the religious field, Bro. Rashid Pierkhan was very a very devoted person. He was President of the Surinaamse Islamitische Vereniging (SIV) for 21 years. The developments within the SIV during this period are quite significant, both in the construction work as well in expanding the organization. He was acting as coordinator for the Central Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Lahore (Pakistan)

for the Jama'ats in Guyana and Trinidad. Under his presidentship some very successful international Ahmadiyya Conventions were held in Suriname. During his business tours, he made it a point to visit various Ahmadiyya Jama'ats in various parts of the world and to the Central Anjuman in Lahore, Pakistan. For his commendable services rendered to the Surinamese society, Bro. Rashid Pierkhan was awarded the honour of Grandmaster in the Order of the Yellow Star, and was made Knight. He was also awarded with the "Sitara-e-Ahmadiyyat" by the SIV.

His Janaza salah was offered at the SIV graveyard, Doekhiweg, Paramaribo. It was led by Maulana Ghulam Nabi Orie. Glimpses of his funeral service were shown on the website of the daily newspaper *Dagblad* which is owned by Mr. Faried Pierkhan, son of the late Bro. Mohammed Rashid Pierkhan

Among his relatives, friends and general public he was known as "a ready helper". In his public welfare work he received full support of his wife, Helouis Indrawatie Somair, and their children, Nisha, Faried and Shireen.

With the demise of Bro. Haji Mohammed Rashid Pierkhan, Suriname has lost a great son and a devoted member of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. May Allah shower His choicest blessings and forgiveness on the departed soul.