

'Candidate' Samy confident of winning big
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With his trademark short-sleeved white shirt and ready smile, MIC president S Samy Vellu made house-to-house visits in a residential estate in Batang Berjuntai on Tuesday afternoon.

He had been campaigning since morning, a daily routine since nominations were declared - so much so that local wags quip that he seems more a candidate for the Ijok by-election on Saturday than Barisan Nasional nominee K Parthiban.

Looking tired, Samy Vellu reminded residents to vote for Parthiban, 38. Some were cajoled, a few scolded and others got a lecture before he was off to nearby Taman Purnama where two houses had caught fire on Monday.

He found time, though, for a quick interview with malaysiakini.

Malaysiakini: A busy period for you Datuk Seri?

Samy Vellu: Yes. I have been campaigning from Day One. I am here daily and by the time I get back home, it is very late at night. Then the next day, I am back here again.

Are you happy with the feedback from the ground?

I am very confident we will retain this seat. I admit we have lost some votes during Sivalingam's time (incumbent state assemblyperson K Sivalingam, photo, whose death on April 4 led to the by-election) but now I think we can regain these lost votes.

(In the 2004 general election, Sivalingam won this Malay-majority seat by a 1,649-vote majority by defeating PKR's Abdul Rahman Moharam.)

How is that possible?

I have made personal visits to all the houses in these areas, especially the Indian areas. I have been talking to all of them. Not just the voters but also their children. I have been talking to everyone, telling them that our candidate Parthiban can bring changes to Ijok.

Will they listen to you?

I know the Indian community. I have been working with them for the past 46 years of my political career. I have been part of them. I have grown with them and I know how to do things without annoying them. I am sure they will listen to me and vote for our candidate.

So you are confident of a higher majority this time?

Our intention is to win, that's all. We just want to win but the hard work we are putting in now could possibly see us obtain something more than what we got in 2004.

Tell us a little more about Parthiban.

We have a young candidate. He is clean and able. Being a local boy, he is known to all. He has worked with the local authority (as a Kuala Selangor district councillor). He was also the special officer for the Umno leaders here. He knows the local issues and he can solve them. Voters like him here and they will vote for him.

Parti Keadilan Rakyat candidate Khalid Ibrahim is also a local boy...

Yes, he is. He is also a corporate figure but I don't think the voters, especially the Indian voters will take to him...

Why?

Because the opposition campaign is a dirty campaign... hitting opponents at personal level. You shouldn't bring down anybody. For us personality is not important. We shouldn't involve personal issues. Let's talk about party matters. Personal attacks won't do anyone any good. The voters will not like that.

'Dirty politics'

Earlier at a press conference, Samy Vellu had lambasted PKR for playing "world-class dirty politics" - because it had circulated fliers containing allegations against the government and BN leaders.

"If we want to, we can distribute thousands of pictures of their leaders and advisor but we're not going to do it because what happened in the past, we will not raise it again," he said.

The Ijok by-election will see a straight fight between Tanjung Karang MIC division secretary Parthiban and PKR treasurer and Selangor chief Khalid Ibrahim.

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