

## **Four lodge police reports over Machap fracas**

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**Beh Lih Yi**

Two police reports have been lodged against MIC Youth chief S Vigneswaran and the wing's members for allegedly assaulting an opposition party's supporters and a photographer, while a third report alleged the use of abusive language against a journalist outside the Machap nomination centre today.

A man has been detained for investigation in connection with complaint of assault.

All three reports, lodged at the Machap Umboo police station, were related to a scuffle that broke out this morning between MIC and DAP supporters about 100 metres from the nomination centre, following a verbal spat that turned ugly.

DAP Negri Sembilan members K Kannis, 42, and S Vijayan, 24, sustained injuries on their head and face in the incident and were taken to a hospital for a medical examination.

In the first police report lodged by Kannis, the complainant said he and Vijayan was beaten up by MIC brigade members wielding bricks and the MIC party flag-stick at about 11.45am, after the nomination process ended.

It is understood that the duo had earlier been part of a crowd of opposition supporters chanting slogans such as Samy Vellu penakut (MIC president S Samy Vellu "is a coward"), Undur lah, Samy Vellu as supporters from both camps traded verbal barbs outside the nomination centre.

According to Kannis, a group of five to six men, wearing the MIC brigade t-shirt, approached him while he and some friends were walking to their vehicles.

"One of them asked 'why did you scold my president like that?', and then I heard people shouting his name and telling him to beat me up," Kannis told reporters at the police station.

He identified three individuals - two of whom were named together with their respective MIC branches in the report - as being involved in the incident. Photographic evidence was also submitted to the police.

In the second police report, Malaysian Nanban journalist R Malini, 30, complained that vulgar words were hurled at her allegedly by an MIC brigade member when she was attempting to take photographs of a group of MIC brigade members after the incident.

She said an individual had said to her in Tamil: 'Why don't you strip your mother naked and take her photo?'

An upset Malini stressed she was only doing her job and that she had received several phone calls from MIC leaders, persuading her not to lodge a police report.

**Claim denied**

Tamil daily Makkal Osai photographer P Malayanadi, 49, in a separate police report complained he had been pushed by the MIC Youth chief with force while trying to take photographs of a man detained by the police.

Malacca chief police officer Ayub Yaakob, who arrived at the police station later, confirmed that a man aged 28 was picked up by the police at the scene of the incident and is being investigated for alleged assault under Section 323 of the Penal Code.

"We are also tracking down two others who have been identified in the photographs," he said.

In an immediate response, Vigneswaran - also parliamentary secretary of the youth and sports ministry - denied he had used force against anyone.

"The police were doing their work at the time and not allowing anyone to take photographs. There was already a commotion and this man came (along, trying to take photographs). I couldn't allow another commotion to occur. I did not push him, I was just escorting him off," he told malaysiakini when contacted.

On the two reports lodged against his men, Vigneswaran said the party would get to the bottom of the matter and the individuals involved would face action if a case is established against them. He said MIC does not condone violence.

Asked whether the DAP is likely to capitalise on the incident in its campaign, he replied: "Let the police investigate. DAP can harp on anything and we can't be bothered."

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said Vigneswaran should be removed from his government position immediately, while party leader and lawyer A Sivanesan urged the Indian community in Machap to consider their options carefully before voting for the BN, of which MIC is a component party.

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