

**Makkal Osai 'snapped up' in Sg Siput**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
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**RK Anand**

Hundreds of copies of MCPX Makkal Osai newspapers in Sungai Siput were snapped up by members of the MIC brigade this morning, according to the daily's general manager S Periasamy.

makkal osai mahathir malaysiakini interviewThe daily had front-paged an interview published by Malaysiakini with former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in which the latter made scathing criticisms against MIC president S Samy Vellu.

Samy Vellu, 71, will be defending the Sungai Siput parliamentary seat in Perak for the ninth term.

"They bought the newspapers en bloc and the copies were burnt at another location," claimed Periasamy.

According to him, the daily had sent extra copies numbering around 400 to the area today.

"We are now sending copies from other towns such as Ipoh, Kuala Kangsar and Taiping to Sungai Siput," he said, adding that the daily's office in Kuala Lumpur has been flooded with phone calls from readers asking about the interview and the shortage of copies in Sungai Siput.

Makkal Osai is linked to Samy Vellu's political nemesis and former deputy S Subramaniam

In the interview, Mahathir had accused the MIC president - his one time close aide - of stifling Indian voices.

Among others, the former premier also said the community's "main grouse is with Samy Vellu" who has helmed MIC for 28 years.

**VCDs circulated by ex-MIC man**

Meanwhile, a former MIC leader in Sungai Siput said he has been circulating thousands of copies of the Malay version of the Malaysiakini interview.

M Loganathan - who was once a staunch ally of Samy Vellu but grew apart in recent years - said copies of the article were circulated in Chinese and Indian areas.

"Samy Vellu will definitely lose in the elections. Not only the Indians, but other races are also unhappy with him. But they may use other means to win," claimed the 50-year-old businessman.

Loganathan, who was expelled from MIC, also said he has been distributing thousands of video compact discs (VCDs) detailing how the party president had allegedly shortchanged his constituents, namely on land issues.

"I produced about 8,000 copies with my own money and have nearly distributed all of them

to the people here," he added.

Samy Vellu could not be reached for comment.

### **Expected to win**

Despite Loganathan's confidence that Samy Vellu would be defeated in his traditional stronghold, ground reports indicated otherwise.

sungai siput parliamentary seat election results 180108The MIC president is expected to retain his seat with a comfortable margin in the three-cornered fight involving Parti Sosialis Malaysia's (PSM) Dr D Jeyakumar and independent Nor Rizan Oon.

In the 2004 polls, Samy Vellu retained the seat with a 10,235 vote majority.

Of the 47,424 voters, 36.3 percent are Malays, Chinese: 40.2 percent, Indians: 22.6 percent and others: 0.8 percent.

Samy Vellu and MIC have also come under intense pressure since the Nov 25 rally organised by the Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) which drew some 30,000 disgruntled Indians to the streets.

Since then, the MIC president, while acknowledging that there are shortcomings, has repeatedly pledged to work harder.

He also denied criticisms that the party has failed to effectively represent the Indian community.

Observers consider this elections as an acid test for both the veteran politician and his party which is contesting in 19 state seats and nine parliamentary seats.

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