

Campaign trail: Scorn scares Sammy not
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MIC president S. Samy Vellu is unperturbed of the possibility that he could once again face scorn from activists should he embark on the election campaign trail.
MCPX

"Normally, when you go to a place to campaign, there would be one or two persons talking (bad about us). That we don't worry about. This is democracy," said Samy Vellu, who previously announced his active participation in the Permatang Pauh by-election campaign.

Samy Vellu exclusive on Tamil schools 080708 06 Samy Vellu said this at a press conference at the party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur when asked if he was worried of the possibility of being confronted by disgruntled groups during the campaign.

The veteran politician was dogged by hecklers and small demonstrations during his campaigning stint nationwide, particularly in Penang and Kedah, during the 12th general-election.

In one incident, a slipper was reportedly thrown at him while in another incident, Samy Vellu skipped a dinner function in Lunas after a 3,000 strong crowd was waiting at the venue to block his convoy.

The anger which Samy Vellu faced was attributed to the rise of the Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) and Makkal Sakthi movements which rallied some tens of thousands to demonstrate in Kuala Lumpur last November.

New strategy to be deployed

To a question, Samy Vellu said he was not bothered with the possible presence of influential Hindraf and Makkal Sakthi movements in Permatang Pauh during the campaign.

"Normally, when we do our job, we only think about ourselves. We don't worry of others... This is a country where everybody has their independence to do whatever they like," he said.

Meanwhile, Samy Vellu revealed that the MIC central working committee which met before the press conference had finalised plans and new strategies for the party's by-election campaign.

"MIC will work closely with other Barisan Nasional component parties to ensure our candidate's victory, although we admit we will face a big challenge from the opposition," he said.

He said the party would be departing from its 'group-style' campaigning and concentrating on a more personal and family orientated house-to-house campaign for the Aug 26 by-election.

"Our approach is face-to-face. No more group-to-group," said the MIC president, who indicated that he would only reveal the further Aces up his sleeve during the campaign.

There are about 3,300 Indian voters in the Permatang Pauh constituency which makes up about five percent of the total 58, 449 voters.

'Racist' teacher controversy

On the ongoing controversy regarding a teacher in Seremban who uttered racial slurs at several students, Samy Vellu was non-committal when asked to recommend the action which should be taken against her.

"I want to tell you: You can recommend, you can talk to them, you can do many things, still there will be people who do this sort of things," he said.

"The nation can be 50 years old but people are not mentally prepared for certain things," he said when asked why such incidents occurred despite 51 years of nation-building.

At least two police reports have been lodged against the secondary school history teacher for uttering racial slurs against several Indian students.

Two students from SMK Telok Panglima Garang who lodged the reports on Aug 1 claimed that the teacher had allegedly called Indians students 'keling pariah', 'negro' and 'black monkeys', among others.

The teacher has since been transferred to another school, reportedly nearer to her house, following the incident.

Various quarters, including Samy Vellu, expressed disappointment over the light punishment.

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