

Subra pulls Dr M out of the hat, Samy vexed
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With less than 48 hours to go before the MIC elections, deputy presidential hopeful S Subramaniam has pulled a rabbit out of the hat.

And this is no ordinary rabbit, it is the influential former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

On the front-page of *Makkal Osai*, a Tamil daily linked to Subramaniam, Mahathir was quoted as praising Subramaniam while attacking his ardent loyalist and MIC president S Samy Vellu.

Among others, he said the Indian community voted for the opposition in the last general election because of their anger towards Samy Vellu.

"He has been too long in the party and had never allowed any leader to grow in the party. He was always concentrating on exacting revenge on his political opponents," said Mahathir, who himself was accused of the same things during his 22-year tenure.

"If the Indian community wants to progress and go forward they should remove Samy Vellu," he added.

It is learnt that the interview was done about a month ago and while Mahathir spoke on numerous issues pertaining to the Indian community, the daily had kept the 'explosive parts' till now.

It is also learnt that the report had set off alarm bells in the MIC president's camp. The report comes a day after Samy Vellu told *Malaysiakini* that outside forces including Umno should not interfere in MIC's affairs.

Samy Vellu: I feel sad and angry

In a statement later, the president questioned his former deputy Subramaniam's motives in seeking the help of other political party leaders to campaign for him.

He said Subramaniam has brought disgrace to the MIC by seeking the help of Mahathir who is also a former Umno president.

Describing the move as "deliberately bringing in outside interference", Samy Vellu said many MIC branch and division leaders and members called him expressing their disgust and anger at Subramaniam's "desperate attempt" to win.

"How cheap and desperate can a man be?" he asked.

"Subramaniam is so desperate that he had to seek the mandate from Mahathir to win in the party elections. He has brought shame to the MIC members and the party," he added.

From the president's viewpoint, Subramaniam appears to have lost his support in MIC and has to seek outside help.

He said by seeking the help of people outside MIC, Subramaniam has lost whatever credibility that was left in him.

"I am extremely angry and sad that he (Subramaniam) has allowed an outsider to meddle in our party affairs, especially in a crucial election for the MIC," he added.

Mahathir preached non-interference

Samy Vellu said even Mahathir had said that Barisan Nasional cannot interfere in the internal affairs of a component party when he referred to the problems in MCA.

"We are not even in any problems for outsiders to get involved. We are just having our elections through the democratic process to allow our delegates to pick their leaders," he said.

Samy Vellu said he was sad that Subramaniam and his cronies have made use of Mahathir for their own self-interest.

"I urge MIC delegates to vehemently condemn the actions by Subramaniam and his supporters in getting an outsider involved in our party matters.

"If we allow this to happen, in future, outsiders will continue to interfere in our affairs and we will lose our dignity and respect," he said.

He said MIC has resolved whatever problems through internal process as one family. "We should not take our problems to an outsider because it is the same as betraying the MIC.

"What Subramaniam did can never be accepted and I can only feel pity for him to seek the help of others outside the party and not rely on MIC delegates to make their choice," he added.

S'gor MIC: Take action against him

Mahathir's endorsement also drew flak from the MIC Selangor state liaison headed by incumbent deputy president G Palanivel. In a statement, the committee lambasted Subramaniam for seeking the help of a leader from another political party.

"We demand Subramaniam to give an immediate clarification to the MIC members and delegates as to why he went against the principles adhered by all BN component parties which is not to interfere in the internal affairs of another component party.

"Subramaniam has disgraced our party and we want the MIC leadership to take action against him for tarnishing the image of MIC," read the two-page statement.

The committee - which held a press conference this afternoon - also claimed that the "so-called interview" with Mahathir was arranged by a person with ill-feelings towards the MIC president.

"We were informed that the meeting was not an interview but a courtesy call by that person and he brought the editor of *Makkal Osai* with him," it added.