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MIC-Samy (chide)

SAMY VELLU BLOWS HIS TOP OVER DELEGATE'S PROPOSAL

JOHOR BAHRU, May 19 (Bernama) -- MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu today blew his top after a delegate debating the presidential address at the 55th MIC General Assembly alleged that the MIC does not practice democracy.

P.Ponmugam of the MIC Seputeh division said the party's secretary-general should be elected instead of appointing someone for the important job.

"Don't tell me how to run this party...if you want give me a proposal by tomorrow on how to run this party and I would run it that way...if you want, you can challenge me in 2003 for the president's post," he told Ponmugam, who wanted the secretary-general's post to be elected rather than appointed as was the current practice.

In a fit of anger, Samy Vellu said: "From now don't call me president, just call me MIC and I will stand up...running a political party is not like running a flower shop, you need capability and brains."

He said Ponmugam should not be questioning democracy in MIC as the fact that he was standing in front of over 1,500 delegates was proof that the party was democratic.

He said Ponmugam should not be telling him on what to do with the party as that was the duty of the majority of the party members.

He then asked the party's office-bearers sitting on the stage to stand up in a symbolic gesture to show that they were indeed elected and those appointed were only a handful.

When he finished, another delegate from Negeri Sembilan wanted to speak on the matter and refused to leave the podium. This caused an uproar among the majority of members with some shouting for the meeting to continue without any such hindrance.

Samy Vellu, however, managed to bring the situation under control when he asked everyone to sit down.

Earlier, Samy Vellu chided some delegates for raising matters that had been stated in the MIC's annual report.

"Read the annual report first...don't waste time asking questions which have already been answered in the annual report," said the visibly agitated Samy Vellu after a few delegates raised matters on the party's 2000 activities and MIC accounts.

Samy Vellu, who was patient with the first four delegates who raised questions when delegates were asked to endorse the annual report, shot up from his seat when the fifth person raised the same matter again.

"We cannot be sitting here answering the same question again and again...we have a lot to do, so do not raise matters that have already been answered," he told the delegates.

He said if the delegates asked proper questions, the office-bearers would be more than happy to give lengthy replies but if the questions were petty, then it would be a waste of precious time.

"We have only two days...we have to use our time judiciously," he said.

The delegates endorsed the annual report after two hours of questions and answers before proceeding to debate on Samy Vellu's presidential address.

Two party veterans -- Datuk M. Muthupalaniapan, the former Negeri Sembilan MIC chairman, and Datuk K. Kumaran, the former Tapah MP and Perak MIC chief -- for their long service to the Indian community.

They were presented a gold medal, a golden shawl and a memento for their contributions.

The two-day assembly opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad this morning is attended by some 1,500 delegates from 162 divisions and 500 observers at the Eden Garden Hotel here.

-- BERNAMA

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