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MIC-History

HISTORY IN THE MAKING AT MIC'S LARGEST GATHERING ON SUNDAY

By: S.Retnanathan

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 7 (Bernama) -- The MIC Election Machinery Convention, to be held in Shah Alam on Sunday, will create history of sorts for the party.

It will not only be the largest ever gathering of MIC leaders but it will also be the first time that more than 10,000 party members will turn up under one roof to give 100 per cent mandate to party president Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu to continue leading the party.

This will be the first time in the party's history that all 4,300 branch chairmen, division and state leaders will converge under the same roof.

It will also be the first time that all MIC leaders, from branch, division, state and national levels, will adopt a resolution calling for Samy Vellu's continued leadership at an election machinery convention.

The convention will in total pass three resolutions. The first will be to thank former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad while the second will be to extend full cooperation and support to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The third and final resolution will be the call for the continued leadership of Samy Vellu, who is Works Minister.

Samy Vellu late last week said that the convention was aimed at mobilising MIC's strength in facing the upcoming general election and mapping out election strategies.

Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamed Khir Toyo are expected to present working papers at the one-day convention.

While all the talk about the general election, expressing appreciation and gratitude to Dr Mahathir and extending support to Abdullah, who took over the helm of the country last Friday, seemed appropriate, one question lingers.

Why should MIC leaders of all levels pass a motion wanting the party supremo to continue his leadership when Samy Vellu was returned unopposed as MIC president for a record ninth term eight months ago?

Furthermore, since the change in the MIC constitution last year, the party president has been picked by all 4,300 branch chairmen and not division leaders as the practice in many other political parties.

Some MIC observers felt that the move to pass the resolution supporting Samy Vellu was to show to certain political party leaders and to "some" MIC bigwigs that the 67-year-old leader was still very much wanted and needed.

Middle of last month, just before the retirement of Dr Mahathir, Indian Progressive Front (IPF) president Datuk M.G. Pandithan made a stinging remark which caused an uproar among MIC members of all ranks.

The former MIC vice-president wanted the head of the largest Indian-based political party in the country to resign and make way for younger leaders.

Pandithan has also said that it would be easier for the IPF, which is a splinter party of the MIC, to join the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) if Samy Vellu was no more in power.

He went on to say that if MIC deputy president Datuk S. Subramaniam was at the helm of the MIC, then the IPF would make it to the BN Supreme Council.

Soon after the statement was made, there was a flurry of comments

defending Samy Vellu and urging him to stay on. MIC vice presidents -- Datuk S. Veerasingham, Datuk G.Palanivel and Tan Sri K.S.Nijhar -- went out of their way to say that the party needed Samy Vellu.

Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP) president Datuk M. Kayveas, in defending another BN component party leader, went a step further to say that Samy Vellu was the only capable leader at present to champion issues involving the Indian community in the country.

However, Subramaniam, the second in charge, was silent on the issue until pressed for answers by the media. The Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister has been the MIC deputy president since 1981.

He broke his silence not to defend his "boss" but to ask Kayveas, who supported Samy Vellu's tenure as MIC president, to keep out of the party's business. No harsh words for Pandithan either.

This has prompted MIC's vicious spin doctors to conclude that Subramaniam was playing "politics" as he has not stated his full support for Samy Vellu neither has he lashed out at Pandithan for making such a call in the first place.

The resolution to be adopted at the convention, some party observers believe, is a way for the party president to send a clear signal that "MIC members are with him all the way" and that any outside interference is not welcome.

It will also once and for all "silence Pandithan" from making unnecessary comments about MIC and its leadership, especially Samy Vellu, said a member of the MIC Central Working Committee who declined to be named.

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