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MIC-Contest

TEAGARAJAN VYING FOR VEEP POST, KEEN TUSSLE IN THE OFFING

KUALA LUMPUR, April 26 (Bernama) -- Datuk V.K.K. Teagarajan, a senior member of the policy-making Central Working Committee (CWC), is contesting for the vice-president's post at next month's MIC General Assembly.

"After serving for 12 years in the CWC, I feel the time is right for me to make the move. There is a time and tide in everyone's life. I feel I can contribute to the Indian community through my experience in economic matters," he told a media conference today.

The 55-year-old textile tycoon said through his experience in the corporate world, he would be able to help the community in various ways, especially in disseminating information on the various loans and grants, which could be obtained by Indians to boost their economic status and quality of life.

With Teagarajan's announcement, MIC insiders expect a keen tussle for the three vice-president's posts in the country's largest Indian-based political party at the May 10 assembly.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would be attending the assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre.

This is the first time Dr Mahathir and Abdullah will be attending the MIC General Assembly together.

The incumbent vice-presidents are National Unity and Social Development Parliamentary Secretary Datuk S. Veerasingham, Rural Development Deputy Minister Datuk G. Palanivel and Subang Member of Parliament Tan Sri Dr K.S. Nijhar.

The incumbents received the blessings of party supremo Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu last week to defend their posts.

Samy Vellu, however, did not shut the doors on others from contesting, saying he would not stop anyone from vying for the post.

Teagarajan said: "I thank the MIC president and have the highest respect for him. I consider him as a member of my family. He is also my political mentor.

"I started young in MIC and within a short period, I was appointed a Senator for two terms. He was the one who gave me the knowledge I needed in politics," said the father of four.

Asked to comment on Samy Vellu's endorsement for the incumbents, Teagarajan said as the party president, Samy Vellu had to give the green light to them to retain their positions.

"I would do the same if I was in his position. My intention to contest for the vice-presidency does not at all mean that I am against him. We're all supporters of the president. He has spoken to me, but did not say that I should not go ahead and contest.

"The MIC president has also made a ruling that he will not bar anyone from contesting. Most of us wait for blessings (from Samy Vellu), some get it directly, some get it indirectly," said Teagarajan, the former Malaysian Indian Chamber of Commerce office bearer.

Asked on the response of the grassroots leaders of his intention, he said the feedback had been positive so far, but felt that he was an underdog in the race.

"Although I know it will be an uphill task, I'm confident I can achieve it and contribute more to the party, especially on economic matters to the community," he said.

Teagarajan also said he was not aiming for any government posts if he was elected as a vice-president.

"If I achieve my aim, my purpose is to bring economic awareness to the Indian community," he said.

Asked if he saw any other aspirant joining the fray for the vice-presidency, he said: "There are many aspirants, but we will leave it to the individuals. They (the aspirants) are my friends, they have also contributed to the party and the community."

He said he would not put up a team for the election, but instead would go for it on his own. A total of 1,497 delegates will attend the assembly.

Meanwhile, James C.S. Selvaraja, the former MIC Youth chief, said he would contest for one of the 23 seats in the CWC.

-- BERNAMA

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