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MIC deputy chief shocked by move

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - MIC deputy president Datuk S. Subramaniam, expressing shock at being dropped as a candidate, said he has the courage to face the situation and would not retire from active politics.

"I still have the energy and drive to serve the community," he said in a hastily-organised Press conference at his house.

Scores of supporters had gathered at his home in Petaling Jaya after hearing the news that party president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu had decided to drop the Deputy Minister for Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs.

Subramaniam, 59, said he did not know the reason for being excluded but admitted that his relationship with the party chief had been "a little strained" over the last three months.

He said his relationship with Samy Vellu was affected after the then Prime Minister Tun Mahathir Mohamad made the statement asking long-serving elected representatives to give way for younger blood.

"I did not make a stand on the statement. I merely kept quiet. Samy Vellu later made a statement he would like to go on.

"I believe strongly in Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's leadership and what is important now is to see the leadership is given a strong mandate in the general election."

Denying that there will be a split in the party, he said: "That is the last thing which should happen. I will advise my supporters to be patient and give their undivided support to the selected candidates."

The father of three who entered politics in the 70s said he had been serving the Indian community and the MIC members and would continue to do so even without a Government post.

"I will still go around campaigning for the BN candidates in areas where my assistance is requested. I wish all the selected candidates all the best in the election."