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Subramaniam dropped to 'make way for new blood'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Datuk S. Subramaniam was today dropped from the MIC's line-up of candidates for the general election and party president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the decision was "to make way for new blood".

Asked why the Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister and Segamat MP was being sidelined, Samy Vellu said he was not excluding anyone but was merely putting up a new team with a blend of new and old faces.

"I'm not dropping anybody, I'm just changing ...because I feel that some new faces have to be introduced. I have to change in order to work as a team to address the challenges faced by the Malaysian-Indian community.

"I also feel duty-bound to provide opportunities to others who have served the party for a long time," he said at his Works Ministry office.

The new MIC candidate for Segamat will be a skin specialist from Malacca, Dr S. Subramaniam, who is Malacca MIC deputy chief.

Samy Vellu dismissed fears that the exclusion of his deputy would divide the party and erode the Indian community's support for the BN.

"I don't think anything can upset the performance of the MIC. It will be better than 1999."

Asked to describe his relationship with his deputy now, since it's an open secret that the two have not seen eye to eye for more than a decade, Samy Vellu said:

"I don't want to say anything about relationship. I'm only talking about the election candidates list."

He also refuted claims that there were different camps in the party.

"There are no camps in MIC, there is only one camp ... that is the camp of the president.

"Datuk Subra has already had everything. He has been an MP, parliamentary secretary and deputy minister for many years.

"He has been an MP, except for one term when he lost his seat and another term when I did not give him the seat due to the political situation at that time.

"But still, within a month I called him back; I asked (former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad) to appoint him as senator and I gave him the deputy minister's position without any objection."

The MIC candidates for parliamentary seats are Samy Vellu (Sungai Siput), Datuk S. Veerasingham (Tapah), Tan Sri K.S. Nijhar (Subang), Datuk G. Palanivel (Hulu Selangor), S. Sothinathan (Teluk Kemang), Komala Krishnamoorthy (Kapar), Dr S. Subramaniam (Segamat), Youth chief S. Vigneswaran (Kota Raja) and educationist S. Devamany (Cameron Highlands).

The four new state seats will be contested by Youth deputy chief S. Ramis (Kahang, Johor), Johor Youth deputy chief M. Asojan (Gambir, Johor), Senator R. Appalanaidu (Behrang, Perak) and P. Subbiyah (Bagan Dalam, Penang).

The others are Datuk K. Rajapathy (Prai), Datuk V. Saravanan (Bukit Selambau, Kedah), S. Ganesan (Lunas, Kedah), M. Devandran (Sabai, Pahang), Dr L. Krishnan (Jeram Padang, Negri Sembilan), Datuk T. Rajagopalu (Port Dickson), Datuk G. Rajoo (Hutan Melintang, Perak), M. Ramachandran (Pasir Panjang, Perak), R. Ganesan (Sungkai, Perak), K. Sivalingam (Ijok, Selangor), V. Jagarasah (Batu Caves), Kamala Ganapathy (Sri Andalas, Selangor), Datuk R. Raghavan (Asahan, Malacca), Datuk K.S. Balakrishnan (Permas, Johor), and S. Krisnasamy (Tenggaroh, Johor).

In Putrajaya, a few hundred supporters of Datuk Subramaniam gathered in front of the residence of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi tonight to seek the Prime Minister's intervention regarding Subramaniam's candidacy in the general election.

They had gathered following news that Subramaniam had been dropped from the MIC list of candidates.

The supporters carried a banner saying "We Want Datuk Subra" and flags of the nation coalition.

They were hoping to see the Prime Minister who was in Perlis to meet BN members there.