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MIC chief: We don't seek cheap publicity

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MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu yesterday took to task Indians who were not co-operating with the party to uplift the socio-economic status of the community.

"Some people are asking what we have done for the community over the last 22 years. We've done so many things during this period that it will be just too much for us to list them one by one," Bernama quoted him as saying in Tamil at the party's branch chairmen convention.

The MIC believed in working for the people, especially the Indian community, and not clamour for cheap publicity as "some parties" had resorted to, said the Works Minister.

Samy Vellu said he had sacrificed time, energy and money to ensure the Indians had a better life since he became MIC president.

Earlier, Samy Vellu pledged to deliver the Indian votes to Barisan Nasional in the next general election and ensure a landslide victory for the coalition.

In one of the largest ever gathering of MIC members - nearly 9,000 - the party also expressed support for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"The MIC believes in loyalty to your leadership and hard work. We will deliver and we will succeed," Samy Vellu pledged to Abdullah before the latter opened the convention.

In an apparent reference to Abdullah's calls for the people to work with him and not for him, Samy Vellu said MIC would not only work with the Prime Minister but also give undivided support to the newly-appointed leader.

Samy Vellu said within a week of holding office, Abdullah had drawn admiration from the people for his attempts to reduce bureaucracy in the Government and combat corruption.

Abdullah, he added, had a proven track record of looking after the socio-economic well-being of the Indians, especially through the various Cabinet-level committees chaired by him when he was Deputy Prime Minister.

"The Cabinet Committee on Social Ills had allocated RM20 million to overcome social problems among the Indians. More importantly, the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Workers has addressed the problems faced by foreign workers and Indian traders," Samy Vellu said.

MIC, as the only party representing the Indian community, would ensure that it remained relevant and would continue to look into problems affecting the community, he said.

From a party with 169,168 members at 587 branches in 1979 (the year he took over as acting MIC president), Samy Vellu said MIC now had a membership of 601,012 at 4,300 branches.

Samy Vellu said MIC had drawn up strategies to address problems faced by the community and such plans must be continuously fine-tuned to ensure that the party remained relevant.

He said the party's action task force would be on full alert to face the next general election, due by early 2005. MIC, he said, had come up with several programmes to win over the hearts and minds of voters.

Samy Vellu also thanked former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the latter's contributions in turning Malaysia into a dynamic and modern country during his 22-year tenure.