

80% of Ijok Indian voters supported BN
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MIC President S Samy Vellu today said that almost 80 percent of the Indian voters in Ijok had supported the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition in last week's by-election.

However he indicated that the percentage could have been higher if all eligible Indian voters had registered themselves as voters.

At present there are 3,369 eligible Indian voters in Ijok and Samy Vellu said there were many more who weren't registered.

In some cases, he said, a single house had as many as four or five unregistered voters.

To overcome this, the party has set a national committee to spearhead a voter registration campaign.

According to Bernama, the committee would be headed by one of the party's three vice-presidents.

"We want every eligible Indian to be registered as a voter to face the next general election," Samy Vellu was quoted by Bernama today.

"The Indian votes are very crucial for the Barisan Nasional as evident from the Ijok by-election," he said.

The Works Minister also said that more than 4,000 MIC branches had been given a month to submit to the party headquarters the list of eligible but unregistered voters nationwide.

"The MIC headquarters will then assist the Election Commission to register them," he said.

The party branches have also been instructed to make house-to-house visits to identify the new voters.

The party president also said that MIC branches had been told to identify voters who had changed their house addresses so that they could be traced during an election.

In the Ijok by-election, MIC retained the state seat when its candidate K Parthiban defeated Parti Keadilan Rakyat's Khalid Ibrahim by a majority of 1,850 votes.

Partiban, 38, polled in 5,884 votes and Khalid, 61, garnered 4,034.

The by-election was held following the sudden death of K Sivalingam on April 4.

Changing mentality

Sivalingam was also a Selangor state exco and his death has created a vacancy for the party to fill up in the state cabinet. Sivalingam's portfolio was Unity and Plantation Workers.

Relating to this, Samy Vellu was quoted in another Bernama report as saying that he had

proposed a name to the post.

"I have made my proposal in a letter to Selangor Menteri Besar Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo and it is up to him to decide and announce the name," he was quoted as saying.

He also said that the Ijok by-election has taught a lesson to the party that all MIC elected representatives and divisional and branch leaders must go down to the ground to serve the people well.

"We need to change our mentality in serving society," he added.

"All MIC division leaders would have to submit to me their reports on what they have done for their respective areas."

Voters in Ijok had expressed their dissatisfaction with Sivalingam, stating that he had not brought any progress to this tiny constituency.

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