

MIC president: Indians will always vote BN
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The Indian community in Malaysia will only vote for Barisan Nasional, said MIC president S Samy Vellu today.

"Malaysian Indians do not recognise the symbols of other parties, they only recognise the dacing (the weighing scale symbol of the ruling coalition).

"The only leader they know is (Prime Minister) Abdullah Ahmad Badawi," he added during his opening address at MIC's 61st general assembly in Kuala Lumpur.

The MIC president also stressed on the importance for all aspiring politicians to become 'elect-able and voter-worthy' to all the communities.

"They must build the confidence of the electorate so that they can move beyond race, culture, religion and language to be effective representatives based on their competencies, experience and ability to speak up and fight for justice for all communities," he said.

Samy Vellu said the ruling coalition must groom capable young leaders, who can transcend racial politics and be effective ambassadors of the BN spirit.

"There must be a mindset revolution not just in political thought but political behaviour for the next 50 years," he added.

Emphasis on education

The veteran politician also listed his strategies to prevent Malaysian Indians from becoming further marginalised in the face of globalisation.

"Firstly, we must continue to lay tremendous emphasis on education and strengthen investment in this. Much more attention must be given to pre-schools, primary and secondary schools. Solid educational foundation is necessary," he said.

Samy Vellu pointed out the need to push more Indian students to excel in the SPM and STPM examinations to see a major shift in the employment and income trends.

"Malaysian Indian families must encourage their children to strive hard and ensure that at least two of their children pursue higher education at the university level.

"MIC will encourage the brightest Malaysian Indian youths to enrol in the best universities in the world such as Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale or MIT over the next few years," he said.

Moving into business

The MIC president's second strategy is to equip Malaysian Indians for the market, which he described as the community's best option.

"In the past, Indians were paid workers but this trend has broken with the shift from the rural to urban areas. Many Indians are running small and micro businesses. This is an area which we can develop and foster for the future," he said.

Under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP), he added, the government has promised assistance for the development of small and micro business ventures through increased training opportunities and access to business loans.

Samy Vellu also revealed that the MIC economic bureau has charted out an effective strategy to create 5,000 new micro business entrepreneurs by 2010.

"In addition, we must encourage some Indian businesses to become public listed and others to venture into global markets.

"Instilling an entrepreneurship culture among the young while in school will enable them to recapture the lost rich Indian heritage of trade and commerce of our forefathers," he said.

Samy Vellu said he has spoken to the prime minister personally on the economic agenda for the Indian community to improve the income levels, especially of low income families, enhance business opportunities and enlarge the Indian community's equity participation.

Self reliance

Thirdly, the MIC president also urged the Indian community to respond more effectively in re-grouping its resources through self help and self reliance ventures.

"Within the Indian community are many well qualified professionals and many voluntary organisations, whether social, economic or religious.

"All of us must play our effective role in unison for the betterment of our local neighbourhoods and communities," he said.

Samy Vellu called on the party's leadership at the divisional levels to become an effective link between the community and relevant services.

According to him, the bottom 30 percent of the Indian community, which is regarded as the low income group, is the most vulnerable section.

"They need assistance and support to enable them to have a share in the national development. Furthermore, they require awareness, support and alternate paths to development," he said.

And additional social need, he pointed out, is having access to affordable and available housing.

"MIC leaders must go to the ground and identify those in need of a house and ensure that low income families have access to basic but good housing.

"I call this 'house owning democracy' which enables each family to own at least one house. Awareness on access to housing loans and housing schemes will definitely assist the Indian community to increase their wealth through property ownership," he said.

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