

MIC boss defends his 32-year leadership
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While admitting that some of his decisions might not have gone down well with certain quarters, MIC president S Samy Vellu said he only did "what was right" for the community and the party.

"There were many instances whereby, my decisions were disliked, but I believe that as a leader, I had done what was right for the people.

"I had to do the right thing, and at the same time, get the things right for the community," he told 3,000 MIC delegates and observers at the opening of the 64th MIC general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre today.

NONESamy Vellu, (left) who will call it a day on or before Sept 30, next year, after almost 32 years helming the party, said his leadership era was "tough, testing and challenging".

"There were social, structural changes that were taking place in the community, and predicaments in the education, economic, employment and religious sectors were constantly brought to us in the MIC leadership," he said.

The MIC chief also lashed out at certain individuals for dividing the Indian community, resulting in the formation of many small political parties.

"Many of us are guilty of splitting the Indian community into various small, insignificant and fragmented groups which claim to champion for their narrow-based (minded) causes.

He said, on one side, there were non-governmental organisations which seemed to be championing educational issues, while on the other, there were Indian groups which claimed to represent the voice of the underprivileged.

NONEThere were also groups formed solely to gain political support, but were unable to sustain their presence as they did not have a clear road map for the Indian community, he noted.

"As much as many of us love to deny the truth, it is a matter of fact that despite all the challenges faced, the MIC persists to remain strong, relevant, vibrant, and is the one and the only voice of the Indian community," said Samy Vellu.

Indian-based parties told to close ranks

The party president then invited all Indian-based political parties to close ranks and work closely with the MIC.

"Let's unite as a united Indian force as this is essential to see BN through the upcoming general election.

"No matter how distinct our opinions are, let us put our differences aside and let's harness our uniting factors such as the future of our children, as well as the community's well-being. Let us also unite to work together as one with the other communities that we must co-exist with, in this prosperous nation," he said.

Samy Vellu said over the past three decades, the MIC had transformed the Indians from being backward into a respected community in Malaysia.

"We have built the foundation for Malaysian Indian children who now have an opportunity to study, compete and achieve supremacy in any field of preference," he said.

The former works minister said over the past three decades, he had devoted his life to the community, party and government.

"I started as a humble member of the party and with the support of party members, I have been fortunate enough to have had the privilege to be given, a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lead the party and the community," he said.

He said, there was much left to be desired in the party's state of affairs 30 years ago, and it was then that he decided to embark on a journey of change and transformation for the Indian community to achieve what others had, and at the same time, take charge of their lives and future.

Samy Vellu said he was extremely grateful to the people who assisted him throughout his presidency.

"I am profoundly grateful for the support of so many Malaysians who somehow know that I care about them at great extent, that I care about their problems and their dreams. I am grateful to those who have stood by me in the party and in the Barisan Nasional, and rendered undivided moral support for me.

"May God guide us together, in order to charter the path of success for the people,' he concluded in his speech.

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