

## **A teacher to lead MIC's charge in Ijok?**

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**K Kabilan**

A rank outsider has appeared to be the MIC's apparent choice as the candidate for the Ijok state seat by-election which will be held on April 28.

Selangor MIC sources told malaysiakini that graduate teacher K Parthiban, 38, has been given the nod by MIC president S Samy Vellu to lead the party's charge in the by-election.

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

Previously it has been speculated that the party leadership was keen to nominate 39-year-old lawyer S Murugesan (photo) to replace the veteran Sivalingam who died of a heart attack in India.

The Klang-born Murugesan, who is also a member of the party's powerful central working committee, has the support of several senior party leaders in Selangor, including G Palanivel, the party's deputy president and Selangor state chief.

However, malaysiakini reported on Wednesday that Murugesan's candidacy was not final and that several other front-runners should not be discounted just yet.

At that time, the other names said to be in the hat were another CWC member, T Mohan, and Shah Alam city councillor S Murugavellu.

However, the latest speculation in a total outsider and someone who was not mentioned previously is an unexpected twist.

Several MIC leaders from Kuala Selangor and its neighbouring areas told malaysiakini today that Parthiban was chosen as a result of pressure from the local MIC leaders.

"Parthiban is a local boy. We wanted a local-born person to be our elected representative and we told this to the state-level leaders and the top party hierarchy," said a division deputy chief when contacted today.

"The other front-runner Murugesan is from Klang. The late Sivalingam was also not from here. It's about time we had our own boy being the candidate," added the influential grassroots leader who did not want to be named.

### **Education officer**

Parthiban was born in Raja Musa estate in Kuala Selangor, which also includes Ijok under its parliamentary constituency.

He went to a local Tamil school and return later to the same school as a trained teacher. He then went on to continue his tertiary education at a local university before teaching in secondary schools in both Kuala Selangor and Tanjung Karang.

Parthiban is currently an education officer at the Kuala Selangor district education

department.

Born to plantation workers, Parthiban is also the Tanjung Karang MIC division secretary.

Parthiban was not available for comments today but Tamil daily Malaysia Nanban quoted him as saying that if he was the chosen candidate and if he wins the by-election, his main aim would be to bring development to the state constituency.

"I want to create more working opportunities in Ijok," he was quoted as saying.

Ruling coalition Barisan Nasional will be officially announcing its candidate for Ijok tomorrow afternoon.

Selangor Menteri Besar Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo and Samy Vellu will be naming their candidate at a function at Dewan Harmoni in Ijok.

Khir was quoted by Bernama as saying that the BN candidate would be a young, capable and experienced person.

### **Rift in MIC branches?**

A state MIC leader however still believed that Murugesan, and not Parthiban, would be that chosen candidate.

"All this talk about Parthiban is just created by the local level leaders to confuse people. I think the party has decided on Murugesan," he said today.

"Not all branches in Kuala Selangor want Parthiban. Although they want a local boy, they just can't agree on who should be the candidate," added the anonymous politician.

Previously, some Kuala Selangor MIC branches have proposed party veteran and Kuala Selangor MIC division chief P Thirumoorthy, 55 and a teacher, as a candidate.

The source also said that an open rift could result in Kuala Selangor MIC due to this conflict.

"Some branches might even decide to openly defy the party leadership if Parthiban is chosen," he added in justifying his reasons as to why Parthiban might not get the nod over Murugesan.

The nomination for the Ijok by-election is on April 19.

### **PKR's candidate**

The by-election is expected to be a straight fight between BN and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR).

The opposition party looks set to unleash its treasurer and Selangor state chief Khalid Ibrahim to wrest the seat away from BN in this Malay-majority seat.

Khalid, a local boy from Kuala Selangor, is the former chief executive officer of Permodalan Nasional Berhad.

The electoral roll for Ijok comprises 12,335 voters, of which Malay voters make up 51.04 percent, Indians 28.16 percent and Chinese 20.59 percent.

Sivalingam won the seat for a third term when he defeated Keadilan's Abdul Rahman Moharam with a 1,649-vote majority in the last general election in 2004.

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