

**Samy: MIC members will choose my successor**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Jul 12, 2008**  
**S Pathmawathy and Tarani Palani**

It remains a mystery as who will succeed MIC president S Samy Vellu as he admits that he has no succession plan in place.  
MCPX

Speaking at a press conference after addressing the party's 62nd general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur this morning, Samy said he will leave it to the grassroots to choose their next leader.

"The grassroots can elect their next leader. When there is an election, the question of 'automatic' (succession) goes off. I don't think anything can happen without an election," he told reporters.

mic 62 agm 120708 abdullah hands "We want everybody to think that finally it is the members who are going to elect the president," he said referring to the 3,600 delegates who will have their say in electing the president come March next year.

He also clarified that branches are free to elect whoever they want as their leaders and he will not object to it.

Asked on his readiness to step down after the abysmal showing of MIC in the last elections, Samy deflected the idea by saying that the embattled Indian-based party is in the process of a "strong rejuvenation".

"I don't know if that sort of a thing can happen now. I could have just dropped the party and walked away. But I don't want to see MIC destroyed," he explained.

g palanivel Previously, in the 2006 party election, Samy had openly voiced his support for his former press secretary, G Palanivel to be deputy president.

Palanivel eventually stood against incumbent S Subramaniam and won. However, with Samy Vellu's statement today that there is no succession plan in place, it might pose another deep-seated problem for the beleaguered party.

MIC is the only major party in the Barisan Nasional without a clear succession plan as both MCA and Umno have announced theirs in recent days.

"I have to engage with overseas experts to draw my succession plan since you are so interested," Samy joked in response to repeated questions on the leadership transition in the party.

There appears to be no frontrunner for Samy's successor. In a Malaysiakini poll yesterday participated by 5,109 readers, 22 percent voted for Subramaniam while Palanivel ended up a distant third with 3.1 percent.

**Grassroots must behave like grassroots**

In his keynote address earlier, the MIC president started on a stiff note saying that "grassroots should behave like grassroots", in apparent reference to the 'walk-out' of some delegates at a party dinner last night.

mic 62 agm 120708 saravanan In the incident, it is learnt that Samy's ire started with party information chief M Saravanan leaving the function hall early, after having stayed for only 15 minutes. His followers also left with him. This resulted in an annoyed Samy to also leave the dinner early.

Saravanan, who is the deputy federal territory minister, confirmed with the Star today that he had left early "as there was no protocol at the dinner."

He added that he was cheesed off because [former deputy president] S Subramaniam was seated at the main table with other MIC leaders and prominent Indian businessmen.

"As the party's information chief and deputy minister, I was not given due respect," Saravanan said, adding that "I don't know on what basis Subramaniam was given prominence as he is just a division leader."

mic 62 agm 120708 delegates On the incident, Samy indicated to reporters that some media would twist it as a sign of protest to his leadership.

"What actually happened was that the moment they finished eating, they left while others were still dining.

"If they are that unhappy with Samy Vellu, they wouldn't be here today," he laughed.

In his speech, Samy also highlighted five main issues faced by the Indian community that require urgent government attention.

The areas of concern are transportation licensing, agro-businesses, small and medium enterprises, metal scrap dealing and vendor development and entrepreneurship.

He pledged MIC's solidarity with the Barisan Nasional, adding that "the BN are the guardians of the multiracial society in Malaysia".

He however urged BN to do away with racial politics in order to win back support from the people.

mic 62 agm 120708 abdullah smile Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who opened the assembly stressed that MIC is an old friend and BN will stand by the party.

"Whatever the difficulties and whatever the failures, we have to look at all of this (referring to general election results) as a lesson to learn from. It is not a tragedy, it is a lesson," he said.

The prime minister also spoke about the four issues plaguing the government's administration.

"We have to work very hard together to resolve issues such as the fuel price hike, rising inflation, world food crisis and competition for the global market," he added.

### **Samy: Different style of politics**

Commenting on the determination to rebrand the party, Samy pointed out that MIC had won many times, "so what is the distress that we have lost once". This drew enthusiastic cheers from the delegates.

The MIC supremo who has led the party for 29 years then referred to an age old Tamil proverb which translates that "the only way to learn hard lessons is through experience, no matter how painful".

He subsequently said that a change is needed in the style of politics but conceded that rebranding would be a mammoth task which must be implemented.

"It's a very big exercise to convert (the members) to new thinking," he confessed.

Commenting on Abdullah's plan to hand over the premiership to his deputy Najib Razak in 2010, Samy quipped that the duo are "good partners".

However he implied that MIC did not have much role in the decision- making process.

"Although we are partners in Barisan Nasional, we can only see what is happening. We are not active participants. Still it is their (Umno) decision," lamented Samy.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/86004>