

**Samy's son says won't stand in polls, deflects nepotism claims**  
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**By Hafidz Baharom**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 16 — S. Vell Paari has declared he will not stand in the next general election, dismissing any suggestion that his presence in the national MIC leadership could lead to a continuation of the legacy of his father Datuk Seri S Samy Vellu, who served for 11 terms as the president of the Barisan Nasional (BN) party.

Samy Vellu's leadership of MIC was tumultuous and divided the Indian community. Opposition to Samy Vellu came to a head in 2008 when he surprisingly lost his Sungai Siput parliamentary seat to a socialist lightweight.

The man styled as essentially the paramount leader of the Indian community, in particular the Tamils, was eventually forced to relinquish his position as MIC president last January to make way for new blood and pave the way for reforms in a bid to win back support for Indian voters for BN.

But Samy Vellu remains a powerful influence in the MIC and his son's presence in the party's leadership team appeared to be a symbol of how the man's shadow still looms large over the party.

Currently MIC's publicity and communications chief, Vell Paari told The Malaysian Insider earlier this week he was offered to contest his father's old seat by the party president, Datuk Seri G Palanivel, but had declined the offer.

"The party president did offer me the seat early this year in January, telling me one seat was confirmed for me but I thanked him for his confidence in me and I declined it," he said.

A local daily reported last year that MIC insiders were looking to name Vell Paari to contest in Sungai Siput, which was lost to Dr Jeyakumar Devaraj of the PSM.

Vell Paari in an interview said that he was unqualified to run and wanted to avoid the perception of nepotism.

"It is not fair for me to go out there and get a seat just because my father is the former president of the party," he said.

He added that the MIC unlike its Barisan Nasional allies had very few seats to contest in the polls and thus had to field better talent than him.

"We only have nine parliament seats, we won four (in 2008), of which I believe these four incumbents will remain.

"We have to field better candidates for the five," he said.

When asked what he would be doing for the party, the son of the party's former chief said he would focus on building the party and giving fair comment.

"I want to remain, I want to be able to do things, to call a spade a spade," he said.

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