

Dr Subra Set To Challenge Palani For MIC Top Post
Bernama
27 May, 2013
By Prem Kumar Panjamorthy

KUALA LUMPUR, May 27 (Bernama) -- After a "contest-free" 20 years or so for the coveted post of president in the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), incumbent party chief Datuk Seri G. Palanivel is expected to face a tough challenge in the defence of his position at the party's presidential polls to be called in about eight to nine months.

The last time the 67-year-old party had a presidential contest was in 1993, when the then MIC President Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu was challenged by S. Subramaniam, better known as Jumbo Maniam. Samy Vellu won the contest.

A prominent MIC veteran who spoke on condition of anonymity said the current deputy president, Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, seems to be planning to mount a serious challenge for the post.

Dr Subra, as he is known in MIC circles, will have an arduous time between now and the election to secure the support of branch chairmen and, at the same time, to keep up with his busy schedule as the new health minister.

Dr Subra recently indicated his intention to go for the post to party elder Samy Vellu to get the latter's blessings.

"He (Samy Vellu) has given his green light," the source told Bernama, saying that this was against the backdrop of the party's democratic constitution.

As the longest-serving MIC president until he relinquished his position in 2010, Samy Vellu is said to be still "in control" of more than 45 per cent of the 3,700 branch chairmen who will elect the new president.

Dr Subra, 60, is a dermatologist by training and the Segamat Member of Parliament since 2004. He served as the parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government from 2004 to 2008, before being appointed as the Minister of Human Resources after the 12th General Election.

Palanivel, 64, was a journalist in Bernama and an aide to Samy Vellu at one time.

The last presidential election was held in March 2009, for a three-year term, where Samy Vellu won unopposed.

Samy Vellu passed the leadership baton to the then deputy president, Palanivel, the current Minister of Natural Resources and Environment.

MIC elections at all levels would be held by the first quarter of next year, according to the decision taken by the party at its highest decision-making council, the Central Working Committee (CWC), recently.

The presidential election is held three months before polling for the deputy president, three vice-presidents and 23 CWC members.

With Dr Subra setting his path clear for a presidential challenge, the next big question is who the aspirant deputy president will be.

An internal source said that MIC vice-president Datuk M. Saravanan is keen to contest the No. 2 post and is believed to be holding talks with both Palanivel and Subramaniam as to whom he should form a tag with in the polls.

Saravanan, known as a young and capable leader, wants to ride on the "new tech savvy generation" of the MIC leadership.

The deputy youth and sports minister is believed to have no problems in securing Samy Vellu's acquiescence as the former is a staunch follower of the 77-year-old leader who still has a strong say in the party.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2013 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=952268>