

Have Re-Elections Or Face Deregistration, MIC Told

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KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- The MIC's "working" committee's tumultuous meeting last Thursday was a clear indication that the party was indeed facing a leadership crisis.

The fairly large turnout of party members protesting against President Datuk Seri G. Palanivel that day has signalled the urgent need for the party to resolve all the outstanding issues before the situation became worse.

As one of the main component parties of the Barisan Nasional (BN) looking after the interests of the Indian community in this country, it is imperative that the MIC resolves its internal problems and heed the directive by the Registrar of Societies (ROS) to hold re-elections for the three Vice-President posts and 23 Central Working Committee (CWC) posts.

The re-election order comes as a black mark in the history of the party, which was established in August 1946, and is a blow to its efforts to rejuvenate itself following its dismal performance at the 2008 and 2013 general elections.

WIN-WIN APPROACH

To resolve the various issues confronting the party, the MIC must, under the stewardship of Palanivel, try its utmost best to look for a win-win approach, including having a meeting with ROS and also Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Palanivel's first task is to set up a special committee comprising the party president, his deputy Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, and the five complainants who had lodged reports with the ROS over allegations of wrongdoing during the party elections. Setting up such a panel will prove that Palanivel is sincere about his intentions to resolve the crisis.

Last Thursday's "working" committee (the CWC itself was declared invalid following the ROS directive to the party to conduct re-elections) meeting was hastily improvised to include six ex-CWC members like former Youth chief Datuk T.Mohan, former Puteri chief S. Usha Nandhini, Datuk N. Muniandy, as well as their lawyer.

At a press conference later, attended by more than 50 journalists and photographers, Palanivel said the MIC would form a joint committee to look into several issues concerning the party polls, and he also stressed that he did not want the party to be deregistered.

TWO CHOICES

Whether it likes it or not, the MIC only has two choices - conduct fresh polls or face the risk of being deregistered.

The safe path, of course, would be to call for elections again and allow the grassroots to decide who they want as leaders to steer the party, said a political analyst.

Associate Prof Datuk Dr Samsul Adabi Mamat, who is a senior lecturer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Social Science and Humanities Faculty, felt that the party's entire leadership should be re-elected to enable it to play a more prominent role in the BN.

"If the demand (for change from the party members) can lead to transformation and enable the party to play a bigger role in BN, then re-elections must be held. This will bring about transformation in the MIC, thus enabling it to become an efficient member of BN.

"But what I'm worried about is that those people demanding for re-elections may have been 'poisoned' by certain quarters outside the party. Everything depends on the decision taken by the MIC leadership as to its next course of action," he told Bernama, here.

PALANIVEL'S COMMITMENT

Palanivel, who is also Natural Resources and Environment Minister, has given his commitment to strengthen the MIC and guide the party forward with confidence.

"We have to resolve whatever problems we have as soon as possible. The most important thing is MIC must go forward. I don't want to see the party being deregistered," the party president had stressed.

The question is, if re-elections are held, will all party members accept the outcome, what with Palanivel remaining the party chief.

Samsul Adabi said if fresh polls were held, as ordered by the ROS, it would only be proper for all party members to put their differences and dissatisfaction aside and come together in solidarity for the sake of the party.

"Even if new elections are held, dissatisfaction will still prevail because we can't please everybody. The important thing is for the MIC to emerge united and focus on gaining the support of the Indians before the next general election," he added.

On Dec 5, the ROS directed the MIC to conduct re-elections for the 23 CWC posts and three Vice-President posts within 90 days, after it found irregularities and breach of the party's constitution and the Societies Act 1966.

NO NEED FOR RE-ELECTIONS

Meanwhile, Tamil Youth Bell Club President K. Murali opined that re-elections for the Vice-President and CWC posts should not be held "for now".

"If the re-elections involve the entire leadership, from the president downwards, then it

will be meaningful to have it (re-elections) because the MIC is moving so slowly now, and there are so many complaints against the president," he told Bernama.

He felt that the party would not achieve much even if the re-elections were held as they (the fresh polls) were obviously in the agenda of certain individuals who only had their interests at heart.

"We all know that Palanivel will step down as president in March 2016, hence why not wait (to hold the elections) till then... why do you need to mess up the party?" he asked.

Murali said it was imperative for the MIC to work on regaining the confidence of the people first, and then consider having party elections.

"Last Thursday's chaos shows that the party doesn't have its house in order. Previously, there were protests against (former party president Datuk S.) Samy Vellu, now they are against Palanivel and later if Subramaniam takes over, they will demonstrate against him. It's becoming the trend and it has to be stopped," he added.

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