

PM: Samy Vellu's right to endorse candidates

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PUTRAJAYA, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that it was up to MIC president Datuk Seri S Samy Vellu if he wanted to endorse candidates for positions in the party.

The Barisan Nasional chairman said although Samy Vellu was free to make his choice of candidates known, the final decision lay with the delegates.

"It is really up to him . . . but the members can reject (them) if they want to," he told reporters after attending a private function here.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the move by Samy Vellu to endorse Datuk G. Palanivel, Datuk St Veerasingam and Tan Sri Dr K.S. Nijhar as his choices for the party's three vice-presidents before the

MIC election yesterday.

Samy Vellu endorsed the three in an interview with the New *Straits Times* earlier this week stating that the three were the kind of leaders the party needed.

"Palanivel is a new man. Just came in two terms ago. Veerasingam is an effective leader and we are trying to bring in Nijhar this time as he is an economist."

The three emerged victors in the party election held yesterday.

The other contestants for the vice-presidential posts included incumbent vice-president Datuk M. Muthupalaniappan, former Kapar MP Dr Leela Rama and Gadong Jaya branch chairman K. Mahalingam.