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MIC submits name to PM

M.K. Megan

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu submitted the name of the MIC candidate for the Lunas by-election to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

Without naming the candidate, the Works Minister said the candidate was born in Sungai Petani and had all the qualifications to contest in the by-election for the State seat.

"He has been active in Kedah MIC. He is a good candidate," he said, adding that even the candidate himself did not know that he had been nominated.

"However, I think the Kedah Menteri Besar will announce the name of the candidate since this is a State seat," said Samy Vellu after chairing an emergency central working committee meeting at the party headquarters here today.

The Lunas seat fell vacant after State Assemblyman Dr Joe Fernandez was shot dead by two unidentified gunmen last Saturday.

Samy Vellu said the candidate, in his early 50s, had served the Kedah MIC for a long time.

Among the candidates who fit Samy Vellu's bill would be former Kedah MIC secretary S. Parasuraman and former assistant secretary A. Antonysamy.

However, some party insiders are not ruling out incumbent State MIC secretary C. Ganesan although he is in his mid-40s.

"This is a crucial fight and we are confident that we can win this seat again," Samy Vellu said.

He said based on the 1999 elections, 14 of the 19 voting centres in the Lunas constituency were considered "good" while two each were "dangerous" and fence-sitters.

"Nevertheless, we are going on an aggressive publicity campaign and we have charted our strategy. We are going to expose all the lies by the Opposition."

Samy Vellu labelled as drama the Opposition's indecisiveness on its candidate for the by-election.

The seat has 43.4 per cent Malay voters, 37 per cent Chinese, 19.1 per cent Indians and 0.5 per cent others.

In the last general election, Dr Fernandez retained the seat with a 4,700-vote majority, beating M. Kathiravelo of DAP who polled 5,060 votes, Ibrahim Mohamed Rashidi (Independent - 2,158 votes) and N. Letchumanan (Independent - 87 votes).

(END)