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Don't offer free trips, warns Samy Vellu

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - MIC candidates contesting the party branch and divisional elections next month were today warned against offering delegates free trips, especially to Thailand to woo them.

Party president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said during the last party elections in 2000, two such cases were reported.

"No stern action was taken then and recently, we were informed that one of the two same divisional leaders had again tried to influence delegates with free trips.

"We are not going to be so lenient this time and will not hesitate to expel or suspend the delegate involved," he said after chairing the party's central working committee meeting. "We do not mind dinners but no free holidays.

He urged all delegates to work hard and to conduct branch elections, which begin next month, in a democratic and disciplined manner. "Please ensure the elections are free of fights, and that the party's name and honour are upheld at all times."

All branches and divisions must complete their elections by Feb 28 and March 31 respectively, while States must elect their representatives by April 31. The presidential election is fixed for March 30, with nominations on March 8.

Samy Vellu said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had agreed to open the party's two-day 57th annual general assembly on May 10 at the Putra World Trade Centre.

He also said several new regulations had been introduced to ensure a smoother election process but did not elaborate.

Samy Vellu said that membership for the party's newest wing, Puteri MIC, was now 2,900 and the movement was confident of swelling its membership to 10,000 soon.

"The CWC also decided, due to the increase in membership, to split the party's division in Kuala Lipis, with a new division set up in Cameron Highlands," he said, adding that more divisions would be set up once the new constituencies had been decided.