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Dr M to open MIC assembly for last time

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The MIC's 57th general assembly tomorrow will be most memorable for the more than 1,400 delegates as it will be the last one to be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who retires in October.

In appreciation of Dr Mahathir's services to the Indian community, the MIC will present him with a special gift which has been kept as a surprise by the party leadership.

Dr Mahathir's deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and other Barisan Nasional component party leaders will also be present for the opening of the two-day assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said a total of 16 resolutions will be tabled at the assembly, one of them is to pledge support for Dr Mahathir and also to ask him, the Barisan Nasional chairman, for more Parliamentary and State seats for the MIC in the next general election.

Apart from the contest for the 23 central working committee positions, the assembly is expected to be a tame affair as all other top positions have been uncontested.

What could have been a thrilling tussle for the three vice-presidencies fizzled out when challenger V.K.K. Teagarajan withdrew from it.

His withdrawal gave incumbents Datuk G Palanivel, Datuk S. Veerasingam and Tan Sri K.S.Nijhar uncontested victories. Samy Vellu and his deputy Datuk S. Subramaniam were earlier returned unopposed.

The assembly is also expected to focus on the party's readiness in helping the BN face the next election.

It will also be a first for the MIC which will introduce electronic voting to make the polling process much speedier and easier.

"The voting process is expected to take about six hours, while we only need about two minutes to tally the votes," said party secretary-general S. Sothinathan.

A trial run was conducted recently and the leadership was satisfied.