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Dr M: Makkal Sakti a trump card

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KUALA LUMPUR: The newly-formed Malaysia Makkal Sakti Party could be Barisan Nasional's trump card in regaining the support of the Indian community with the MIC losing grassroots support.

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad believes the formation of the party would help garner support from the Indian community.

"There seems to be a lot of support for the formation of this party. I think it is a good thing because we don't want to lose the support of the

New party can help BN regain Indian support, says ex-PM

Indians," he said at his Hari Raya open house in Seri Kembangan yesterday.

Asked if the formation of another Indian party would dilute MIC's influence further, he replied: "Well, I think the influence of MIC has already been diluted."

Dr Mahathir also mocked MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu's decision to take two months' leave from his presidential duties.

It was reported that Samy Vellu would take a two-month break as part of his strategy in relinquishing his post.

His deputy Datuk G. Palanivel would temporarily take over his duties.

"It (the break) should be extended to 20 years. Twenty years would be okay," he said.

Dr Mahathir pointed out that he had served for 22 years and yet he

was willing to let go of his position.

"He cannot sit there for more than 30 years, much longer than me. When I relinquished my post, there was not much hatred. The longer he sits there, more people will hate (him for it)," he said.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir again said Tan Sri Mohd Isa Samad should not take part in the Bagan Pinang by-election as

a candidate.

"If I were Isa, I would ask not to be nominated. On the contrary, I would work hard to help the nominated candidate win and with that, Isa's name would be revered. In Malaysia, there is no such culture, we have the culture of wanting everything," he said.

"We do not just want to win. If we win (with a tainted candidate), it would embarrass us.

"If the candidate is not clean and we allow him victory, it is not good," he said.