

Samy to MIC: It's either Subra or me

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu has finally thrown down the gauntlet, saying it was time MIC delegates chose between him and his estranged deputy.

The party president said he believed Datuk S. Subramaniam was behind moves to undermine him, citing the latest controversy where two Tamil newspapers had quoted him as saying that former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had done nothing for the Indian community.

"He wants to take the MIC through the backdoor, I will not allow it. If he wants to contest against me, I will allow him to challenge me," he said yesterday.

"I don't mind calling for a new presidential elections."

Samy Vellu said he had had enough of the attacks against him over the past 25 years.

"They have tried to prove that I am not worthy to be president. It is time for the MIC delegates to decide whether they want Subramaniam to continue in the party," he said.

Subramaniam had challenged Samy Vellu for the presidency in 1990 but lost. The two patched up, but in August last year, Samy Vellu announced that he was nominating vice-president Datuk G. Palanivel for the number two post in MIC.

In the March presidential elections this year, Samy Vellu was elected unopposed for a record 10th term.

Nominations for the post of deputy president and the three vice-presidents as well as the



Samy: 'If he (Subra) wants to contest against me, I will allow him to challenge me'



Subra: Had challenged Samy Vellu for the MIC presidency in 1990 but lost

23 central working committee seats are scheduled for June 3. Polling is on June 24.

Samy Vellu reiterated that reports in *Malaysia Nanban* and *Makkal Osai* quoting him as saying at the Johor MIC state convention on Tuesday that Dr Mahathir had not done anything for the Indian community were untrue.

"The two papers are aligned to Subramaniam and they want to create friction between me and Dr Mahathir, and problems in the party," he said.

He said "a certain MIC leader" had tried to call Dr Mahathir, who was in Turkey, after the reports appeared.

"Thank God, I had already called Dr Mahathir to explain

that it was not what I had said," Samy Vellu said, adding that he was not one who lacked gratitude, and he would not stoop to making such accusations against the former prime minister.

A close aide of Subramaniam said the deputy president had told his supporters he had nothing to do with Samy Vellu's claims.

"He is going to call for a press conference soon to clarify the matter," said the aide, who declined to be named.

Meanwhile, *Makkal Osai* chairman R. Balakrishnan said the paper was standing by its May 17 report.

"The record of proceedings of the Johor state MIC delegates conference in our possession confirms that our report accurately reflects what Samy Vellu said," he said in a statement.

Samy Vellu had said he would sue both *Malaysia Nanban* and *Makkal Osai* for purposely distorting his speech and causing unnecessary friction between him and Dr Mahathir.

Balakrishnan said it was a pity that Samy Vellu had imputed motives to the daily which were baseless.

