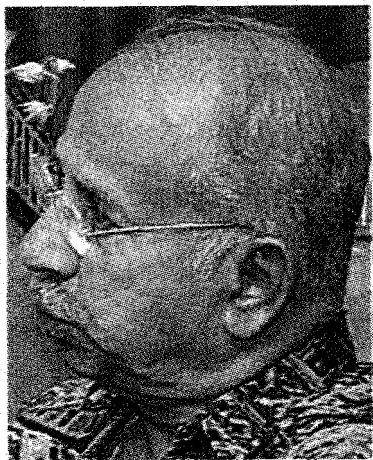


Using caste to gain votes

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Vijayanathan says complaints were forwarded to Sothinathan

KUALA LUMPUR: With time running out, campaigning at the MIC party polls is turning ugly with some campaigners allegedly resorting to dirty tactics.

A list of the party's MPs, assemblymen and senators and the caste they are from is making the rounds.

It is learnt the list has been distributed to all delegates who would cast their votes today.

The message which the list tries to convey is this: the party leadership is dominated by a certain caste.

"The idea is to incite delegates to vote against the president's team," said a party insider.

The list also alleges that three caste groups have been marginalised.

One of them is expelled member Datuk G. Pandithan who is now the president of Indian Progressive Front.

But the effect of the list in influencing the voting pattern is left to be seen.

Meanwhile, some supporters of certain candidates are said to have been "stationed" at hotels to prevent independent candidates contesting for seats in the central working committee from checking in.

Several of the candidates yesterday lodged a report with the party's election committee.

Chairman Datuk K. Vijayanathan confirmed receiving them.

"But we do not have the power to take action on these reports.

"I have forwarded the complaints to party secretary-general (Datuk S. Sothinathan)," he said after chairing a committee meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Vijayanathan said voting would commence after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi delivered his speech.

The results are expected to be announced by 6.30pm.