



Samy Vellu with his winning team (from left) Veerasingam, Sothinathan, Palanivel and Nijhar.

And the winner is... Samy Vellu

■ By V. Vasudevan,
M.K. Megan and
Jason Gerald

KUALA LUMPUR: And the big winner at the MIC elections yesterday was Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

His months of cajoling and prodding the party's 1,441 delegates with the carrot and the stick were rewarded when his men swept into the top positions in the party, sweeping aside the competition with ease.

Nowhere was the president's hand more evident than in the defeat of his deputy and nemesis for years, Datuk S. Subramaniam.

Despite his brave talk and unprecedented door-to-door campaigning, Subramaniam, was defeated by Datuk G. Palanivel by a yawning margin, 933 votes to 495 votes. At the end, realpolitik prevailed.

The defeat marks an end to his

24-year hold on the number two position in MIC and probably consigns him to the sidelines of Malaysian politics.

The defeat also marks the first time that Samy Vellu controls all the levers of power in MIC.

No wonder he wore a contented smile at the end of a long day — a day that began with confusion and raised tempers.

The confusion began at the start of voting when Samy Vellu said that only delegates would be allowed into the main hall at Putra World Trade Centre where the balloting was held.

"All those who are not delegates please leave the hall. If you don't leave, then this election will be considered null and void and we have to conduct another election, so please leave," he told a few hundred observers who were seated in the main hall.

Some dissatisfied observers started to heckle and at the same

time blocked delegates who were trying to get into the hall.

Taking the podium again, Samy Vellu repeated his call.

"There are delegates outside wanting to come in, allow them in or they will miss the flight. This flight does not fly all the time, only once in three years."

Calm only returned when police personnel moved in and started clearing the area.

The victorious candidates learnt of their victories through their agents at 7.30pm.

Subramaniam sat calmly in his seat, occasionally answering calls on his cellphone and smiling at reporters who crowded around.

He knew that Samy Vellu had delivered on his promise of crushing him.

The MIC president was in no mood to be magnanimous.

"Now it is easier for us to carry out our tasks without any disturbances, without any negative pub-

licity, without any police reports and without anyone shooting from the back," he said of Palanivel's victory.

"Everything can be done now. We can look forward with ease to solve the community's problems."

On Subramaniam's future, Samy Vellu said: "I don't know. He is the Seputeh division chief. That is all."

It was quite a while before the newly-minted deputy president could speak to the media as the MIC faithful jostled to garland the president's man.

Palanivel described his victory as a victory for the party and the community.

"I will be a performing deputy. I will not warm my seat," he said, aiming a barb at the vanquished Subra.

In the race for vice-president, the president's "preferred candidates", incumbents Datuk S.

Veerasingham and Tan Sri K. S. Nijhar and party secretary-general Datuk S. Sothinathan, were elected.

Sothinathan emerged top, polling 1,153 votes, Veerasingham 1,141 and Nijhar 939 votes.

The other four vice-president aspirants were MIC veteran Datuk M. Muthupalaniappan who polled 244 votes, Kuala Lumpur MIC chief Datuk V.K.K. Teagarajan (469), former Si Rusa state assemblyman E. Yohevel (111) and P. Tiagarasan (220).

Of the 23 candidates in the president's line-up for the central working committee seats, only two failed to make it.

The two are Datuk Chandrasekhar Suppaiah and Datuk K. Munisamy.

The two "independents" who made it to the CWC, the party's highest policy-making body, are P. Logeswary, better known as Kajang Rane, and R. Ragumoorthy.