

D-Day for MIC polls candidates

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KUALA LUMPUR: Today is the day of reckoning for the 60 candidates contesting the various positions in the MIC party polls, after 20 days of hectic campaigning across the country.

The contestants are expected to line the pathway to Dewan Merdeka to greet the 1,441 delegates attending the 60th MIC general assembly, to be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is also expected to attend.

Voting for the deputy president, three vice-presidents and 23 seats in the central working committee (CWC) is expected to start after the opening ceremony.

All eyes will be on the contest for the deputy president's post, where incumbent Datuk S. Subramaniam is being challenged by vice-president Datuk G. Palanivel, who is also Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister.

Subramaniam undertook a door-to-door campaign to visit delegates in their houses while Palanivel met with delegates in small groups.

Palanivel, the favourite, has a distinct advantage, being backed by party president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and the state chairmen, who are also in the "official line-up" to contest the CWC posts.

However, Subramaniam's camp still believes that he has a chance.

Party officials said Samy Vellu convinced the fence sitters to back Palanivel at a closed-door dinner he hosted for delegates last night.

MIC election committee chairman Datuk K. Vijayanthan said it was all systems go for a fair and transparent election and the delegates are free to vote as they please.

"The concerns by some quarters about the party polls are entirely misplaced. We are inviting pressmen to see for themselves the steps taken by the committee for the elections," he said at the PWTC yesterday.


Seven candidates, including three backed by Samy Vellu, are contesting the three vice-president posts while 51 others, including six women, are contesting for the 23 CWC posts.

Vice-president incumbents Datuk S. Veerasingam, who is Deputy Domestic Trade and




Datuk G. Palanivel, 57

- ▶ Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister and four-term Hulu Selangor MP
- ▶ Deputy Rural Development Minister (1999-2004)
- ▶ MIC vice-president (since 1994)
- ▶ Parliamentary Secretary, National Unity & Social Development Ministry (1995-1999)
- ▶ Selangor MIC chairman (since 1997)
- ▶ Appointed Press Secretary to Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu (1987)
- ▶ Senior Journalist & News Editor, Bernama (1977)
- ▶ Executive Director, Consumers Association of Penang/Editor Utusan Konsumer (1974-1977)
- ▶ Research Officer at the National Museum for the Bujang Valley Project (1973)



Datuk S. Subramaniam, 61

- ▶ MIC deputy president (since 1981) Dropped as Segamat MP (2004)
- ▶ Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister (1982-1990) (1995-2004)
- ▶ Defeated Datuk S.S. Subramaniam to retain MIC deputy president's post (1994)
- ▶ Senator (1978-1982), (1991-1993) Deputy Agriculture Minister (1990, 1991-1993)
- ▶ Lost to Samy Vellu for MIC president's post (1989)
- ▶ MIC vice-president (1979-1981)
- ▶ Deputy Housing & Local Government Minister (1977-1978)
- ▶ Lost to Samy Vellu for MIC deputy president's post (1977)
- ▶ Deputy Minister in PM's Department (1976-1977)
- ▶ Labour & Manpower Ministry Parliamentary Secretary (1974-1976)



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Consumer Affairs Minister, and Subang MP Tan Sri K.S. Nijhar, and secretary general Datuk S. Sothinathan are the "official" candidates while National Information chief Datuk V.K.K. Teagarajan, former Si Rusa state assemblyman E. Yohevel, former MIC vice-president Datuk M. Muthupalaniappan and Klang-based businessman Alex Thiagarasan@ P. Thiagarasan are contesting as "independents."

The three candidates backed by Samy Vellu are expected to come through although Teagarajan, who had withdrawn after filing nominations for a vice-president's post in 2003, and Muthupalaniappan are the dark horses.

Among those contesting the CWC seats as "independents" are four women - S. Sooria Kumari of Puchong, Jelubu MIC division chief P. Mariayee, Hulu Langat division delegate P. Logeswari and former Kapar MP Dr G. Leelavathi.

The two new faces among the 23 official candidates - Segamat MP Dr S. Subramaniam and Sri Andalas state assemblyman Kamala Ganapathy - replace Datuk M. Sellathevan, who has declined re-election, and S.P. Manivasagam, who has been dropped.

The remaining incumbents include seven state chairmen, seven elected representatives, a senator and six others -

Federal Territory MIC deputy chairman Datuk Chandrasekhar Suppiah, Vimalah Nair, Perak state treasurer Datuk K. Munisamy, Professor emeritus Datuk Dr T. Marimuthu, contractor Datuk S. Balakrishnan and former Kota Raja state assemblyman S.S. Rajagopal, all of whom are without government portfolios.

This is the first time in the party's history that such a large number of women are vying for seats in the CWC.

Among the seasoned campaigners eyeing a seat in the CWC are M & A Securities senior vice-president S. Paramasivam, Bukit Bintang MIC division assistant secretary James Selvaraja, former CWC member S.P. Manivasagam, seventh time contestant S.V.S. Velu from the Seputih division, and debutants, Putrajaya division chairman S. Kanappati and well-known textile merchant Gayathiri R. Raghu Moorthy of Klang.

Political analysts expect some casualties among the official CWC list.

They also feel that Raghu Moorthy, James Selvaraja, S.P. Manivasagam and Logeswari, also known as Kajang Rhanee, are likely to get into the CWC.

In the previous two elections, only one independent managed to unseat the official list.