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Mahathir-School

GOVT WILL STUDY IMPLICATION OF CHANGE IN TAMIL SCHOOL STATUS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government is ready to study the MIC request that Tamil schools be changed to fully aided schools and that such schools be set up at new growth centres.

The Prime Minister said both the applications would have to be studied carefully as they involved certain conditions and several other implications.

"I cannot give a specific reply now as we have to study the implications," he said after opening the 43rd MIC general assembly at the Dewan Merdeka, Putra World Trade Centre here.

MIC President Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, when delivering his policy address before the official opening of the assembly, said the present status of the Tamil schools was not in keeping with the times and also not in line with efforts to provide a better education to the various communities in the country.

Samy Vellu, who is Works Minister, said the Tamil schools should be relocated in new growth centres as each year many estate workers moved to such centres and the Tamil schools in the estates had to be closed down.

The Prime Minister said if the government agreed to the relocation of Tamil schools to new growth centres it would involve certain amount of allocations.

"This is because many of the estate schools were built without any assistance from the estate managements. If we have to build new schools, government assistance will have to be sought," he said.

In this respect, if the government provided such allocations to the Indian community than other communities would also ask for similar allocations, Dr Mahathir said.

Hence the government would study the MIC application carefully before making any decision so as to prevent any undesirable implications.

On the MIC request that more Indians be given the opportunity to enter local universities, the Prime Minister said this problem of admission would be resolved when more universities were built in the future.

Asked about the application by the Indian Progressive Front (IPF) to join the Barisan Nasional (BN), the Prime Minister said the BN had to reject it as it was the BN policy to make unanimous decisions.

"As long as all BN members don't agree, we cannot accept it ..as we have this unanimity rule," said Dr Mahathir who is BN Chairman.

Asked whether this meant tha the IPF led by former MIC Vice-President Senator M.G. Pandithan, should be dissolved and the members return to the MIC fold, the Prime Minister said that this was up to Pandithan and his followers.

On the small number of Indian professionals in the MIC, Dr Mahathir said this group should realise that their success was in part due to the MIC's struggle through the BN.

Perhaps this group of professionals did not want to acknowledge this fact but actually the MIC had struggled much for the welfare of Indians in this country, Dr Mahathir said. -- BERNAMA

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