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Samy-Deepavali

MALAYSIANS CAN OVERCOME ECONOMIC WOES, SAYS SAMY VELLU

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 28 (Bernama) -- MIC president Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu has called on Malaysian Hindus to help the country regain its economic balance, saying "not all is gloom and doom" as portrayed especially by the foreign media.

Urging them to rally behind Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, he said they must give their fullest support to the government in its efforts to tackle the current economic woes.

He said they should also do their bit and not allow external forces to determine the fate of the country.

"The present difficulties we are facing now is only temporary.... We must hang on and not despair and give our total support and cooperation," he said in his Deepavali message which will be broadcast over RTM on Thursday.

Samy Vellu, who is Works Minister, said the 1998 Budget has been designed to "see us through difficult times and is also crucial to our long-term economic survival."

Likening the various measures taken to stabilise the ringgit and stock market to that of Deepavali where the good will triumph over evil, Samy Vellu said they should work hard to "free the nation from the clutches of foreign currency speculators and manipulators who are bent on destroying Malaysia."

"We cannot allow foreign financial manipulators to destroy our economy and decide our destiny.

"We shall overcome the problems if we sacrifice. There should be discipline, prudent spending and savings," he said.

Samy Vellu said despite the economic problems facing the country, the tradition of having "open house" during festivals such as Deepavali should continue but on a moderate scale.

(Samy Vellu will hold his open house on Deepavali Day at the hall of Chung Hwa School in Jalan Saint Thomas, off Jalan Ipoh here, between 10am and 2pm.)

On the educational needs of the community, the MIC chief said the party has embarked on yet another mammoth programme -- the Maju Educational Empowerment Trust (MEET)-- designed to meet the challenge in the field of higher education.

He said that under the programme, the MIC plans to raise RM150 million within the first year of its launching which is expected early next year.

MEET will be the second loan fund to be launched by the MIC. The first was the Maju Educational Development Fund (MIED) which has disbursed RM25 million to about 5,000 students over the last 10 years.

"MEET is another innovative programme by the MIC, promising an educational investment scheme which will enable every Indian parent in this country to educate their children at tertiary level.

"Under this scheme, we don't have to depend on others. Self-reliant will be our motto," said Samy Vellu.

He said education is the key for the future when the Indians have to compete with others as the nation set its target of reaching a developed nation status by the year 2020. -- BERNAMA

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