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Estate-Study

ESTATE WORKERS IN FOR BETTER TIMES, STUDY COMPLETED

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 17 (Bernama) -- Estate workers can look forward for better living standards and enjoy their long-cherished dream of drawing monthly salary if MIC's proposals were accepted by the government that comes to power after the Nov 29 general election.

The proposals contained in a study report entitled "Estate Workers Towards The New Millennium", among others, suggest taking immediate measures to fix the quantum of monthly salary between RM900 and RM1,000 while awaiting structuring of a new salary scheme.

According to the study, the salary range was based on current rubber prices and provisions in the agreement signed between Malayan Agriculture Producers' Association (Mapa) and National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW).

The agreement stipulates that estate managements must achieve a productivity level of 1,500kg of latex per hectare a year.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu is expected to present the 75-page report prepared by plantation experts to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Primary Industries Ministry and Human Resources Ministry.

The party also propose that estate workers be recognised as the main target group under the Eighth Malaysia Plan and the Third Outlook Perspective Plan.

Among areas to be given serious attention are:

- * Providing power and pipe water supply to all Mapa-member estates and non-members
- * Giving priority to estate workers in low-cost house ownership, setting aside a certain percentage
- * Upgrading basic amenities in estates and Tamil schools, installing latest facilities such as computers linked to all schools
- * Better accessibility to medical facilities with the government drawing up and implementing a health insurance scheme and;
- * Offering skills training to displaced estate workers to enable them to venture into new fields.

MIC also suggest the government set up a working group outside the ambit of Mapa and NUPW to study in detail the present wage structure besides formulating a new and more attractive salary scheme on par with other sectors.

The party also wants the group to seriously consider the monthly salary issue and use it as a term of reference in drawing up and finalising the new salary structure.

According to the report, the new salary structure should take into account other elements which were of no less importance such as the new rubber-tapping technology.

The report says members of the group must comprise economic, legal and technical experts.

-- BERNAMA

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