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Samy-Remarks

LIM'S REMARKS ON TAPPERS TO BE RAISED IN CABINET

JOHOR BA HARU, May 22 (Bernama) -- MIC president Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu said today he will bring to to the Cabinet the matter concerning Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik's statement that allegedly insults rubber tappers.

Samy Vellu, who is also the works minister, said the statement had caused dissatisfaction among plantation workers.

"The matter has nothing to do with Keng Yaik or Samy Vellu but concerns the dignity of estate workers," he told reporters after opening the 53th Johor MIC Convention here.

Samy Vellu said he did not wish to comment further on Lim's statement to avoid certain groups from turning it into an issue.

Lim made the statement "How could rubber tappers be given monthly wages when nobody knows what they do behind the trees" when answering a question from MIC's Senator N. Marimuthu at the Dewan Negara on Thursday.

Samy Vellu said he recently brought to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's attention the need for plantation workers to be paid monthly wages.

This was after the National Land Finance Cooperative Society (NLFC) started paying monthly wages to all workers in its 17 plantations.

Samy Vellu said Dr Mahathir told him to wait for six months to see if the move by NLFC caused any problems.

The MIC chief said the fate of plantation workers was a concern for all Malaysians as the country's plantations were owned by Malaysians, and not Europeans any more.

Malays make up 39 per cent of the workers and Indian Malaysians the majority of the other 61 per cent, he said.

Thus, the plantation owners were being "undemocratic" and uncaring to fellow Malaysians by not paying monthly wages to the workers, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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