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MIC to study monthly wages issue

Annie Freeda Cruetz

SHAH ALAM, Sat. - The MIC has set up a seven-man committee headed by president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu to study the case for monthly wages for plantation workers and submit a paper to the Cabinet.

The committee is scheduled to hold its first meeting next week and expects to complete the paper in another four weeks, Samy Vellu said today.

He said the committee would include experts in labour law, lawyers and representatives from the plantation sector.

Samy Vellu, who is also the Works Minister, said it would easily take them at least four weeks to come up with the paper as they needed to get input from technical experts.

"Paying daily-rated wages for plantation workers is outdated and needs to be changed to monthly wages just as in some developed and developing countries," Samy Vellu told reporters after opening the Selangor MIC Convention at Dewan Jubli Perak.

He said even though the basic report on the case for monthly wages for plantation workers was almost ready, there were still further details that needed to be included before it could be submitted to the Cabinet.

"I am also happy that Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek has promised to meet and discuss the matter with the Malaysian Agricultural Producers Association and the National Union of Plantation Workers," he added.

He said the time had come for plantation workers, who had toiled in estates for more than 100 years and contributed to the nation's economy, to be paid monthly wages.

"All along, it had been the NUPW holding talks with Mapa on the issue. But realising it was not making any headway, the MIC has decided to take the matter to the Cabinet to find a positive solution."

Samy Vellu said he was confident that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would understand the plantation workers' problem and resolve it amicably.

Earlier, highlighting the estate workers' problem at the MIC Selangor Convention, Samy Vellu said it was time estate managements also realised that they needed to pay workers monthly wages.

He said it was due to their hard work that productivity in the plantation sector had increased, thus making it possible for clerical and management staff to get three to four months' bonuses.

He also reminded the delegates that they should bear in mind that their future was with the Barisan Nasional and its leadership.

"We are happy that we are led by Dr Mahathir who has been the inspiration for national unity and stability. He has been a thinker of new ideas, who has brought this nation to where it is today," he added.

He said that the Prime Minister throughout his leadership had offered both long-term as well as short-term benefits to the people.

"Having worked under his leadership for the last 18 years, I must confess that he always seeks consensus from his Cabinet colleagues on all issues and is prepared for any consequence of his bold actions," he added.

Samy Vellu also pointed out that some disgruntled elements who had benefited from Dr Mahathir's leadership were now trying to undermine the people's faith and confidence in his leadership.

"These disgruntled elements are trying to create a fear of the unknown.

They plan to create stress, tension and anxiety among the people through their narrow thinking and refuse to understand the different perspectives and achievements of Dr Mahathir."

Samy Velly urged Malaysian Indians not to be carried away by a handful of elements who were parasites.

"I want them to look for fundamental truths and identify the illusions which create fear among ordinary citizens. With that, we will be able to envision the various benefits that this nation has derived out of Dr Mahathir's leadership," he added.

Samy Vellu urged the 876 MIC branches with 107,338 members in Selangor to support the Barisan Nasional Government and to carry out their responsibilities with dedication.

* IS MONTHLY WAGE THE ANSWER?: PAGE 13

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