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RM50m for MIC-initiated Kedah institute

S. Shankar

PENANG, Tues. - The Government will allocate a RM50 million grant for the construction of the MIC-initiated Asian Institute of Medicine, Science and Technology (AIMST).

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had reassured him of the allocation during a recent Cabinet meeting.

"It demonstrates the Government's seriousness and sincerity in helping Indians to upgrade their living standards especially in education," he told 300 State MIC division and branch leaders during a briefing on the project in Komtar last night.

Also present were MIC vice-president Datuk G. Palanivel and State MIC chairman Datuk Dr K. Rajapathy.

The RM450-million institute, hailed by Samy Vellu as the biggest education project carried out for the Indian community, will be built on a 91.2-ha site in the Bujang Valley, Kedah.

The ground-breaking ceremony for the project was held in May, 2000.

The institute will be ready by 2004, and will offer degree programmes in medicine, engineering, science and information technology. Samy Vellu, who is also the Public Works Minister, told the State party leaders to go all out to collect the Penang MIC's quota of RM2.2 million for the project.

For a start, Penang MIC and Penang Indian Entrepreneurs plan to organise jointly a show-cum-dinner in January to collect RM200,000, while Taman Hye Keat branch headed by L. Balasubramaniam will organise a similar function to raise RM25,000.

The 203 MIC branches in the State have also been directed to collect RM11,000 each for the project.

The Jalan Raja Uda branch was the first to do so. Bagan MIC division chairman R. Subramaniam handed over the cash, on behalf of the branch, to Samy Vellu last night.

So far MIC has received RM3 million throughout the country for the project, including RM155,000 from the Sungai Siput MCA division.

Although the institute would be open to all races, Samy Vellu said the Indian community would be given priority over others.