

Samy Vellu appeals to temples not to oppose relocation

STAR 16 MAR 2002

By A. LETCHUMANAN

PETALING JAYA: MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu yesterday asked temple managements, especially the smaller ones, not to oppose government efforts to relocate temples to alternate sites nearby.

He said the MIC was facing difficulty in convincing some of the smaller temples to move.

"Being difficult will only make life difficult for us. If you (temple managements) challenge the authorities to tear the temple down, they will tear down the temple and you will have to place your shrines in street corners," he told reporters after laying the foundation stone for the Sri Maha Mariamman Temple in Kelana Jaya yesterday.

Samy Vellu said the party surveyed more than 17,000 temples in the country but only 2,000 responded to the questionnaire.

He said that there were about 190 big and small temples in the Subang and Petaling Jaya Selatan constituencies and Selangor had ordered some of them to be demolished last year.

"The MIC met Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohd Khir Toyo

in October last year and had asked them to defer their decision pending a study on the temples," he said.

He said the party had a hard time convincing the managements of the Ganeshar, Krishnan and Muniswarar temples in Brickfields to agree to be relocated for the construction of the monorail system in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur.

"It took a long time before the temples agreed to be relocated together to a nearby site in Brickfields. Each of the temples were also given RM100,000 in compensation," Samy Vellu said.

He said although the money was not enough to build a new temple, the managements should try to raise funds to build the temples. Samy Vellu appealed to Hindus who want to build temples in future to be aware of the problems faced by the party, community and the Government.

Samy Vellu said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had allocated RM1mil which will be disbursed to the various temples in the country and announced a RM50,000 grant for the temple in Kelana Jaya.