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Ghani-MIC

ADDITIONAL SEATS FOR MIC IN JOHOR- MB

By: Mohd Nasir Yusoff

JOHOR BAHRU, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- There is a big possibility of the Barisan Nasional (BN) allocating additional seats to the Johor MIC in the next general election, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said.

He said even though the responsibility of deciding on the allocation of seats was vested in the Prime Minister and BN Chairman but he believed that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would consider this based on the policy of power sharing as practised by the BN.

"There is a big possibility of additional parliamentary and state seats being created in Johor and I believe the BN leadership will allocate seats to the MIC," he said at a get-together with the Indian community here last night.

Abdul Ghani said he believed that Dr Mahathir would consider additional seats for the MIC for in the last 10 general elections, the component parties had shared power, had shared the vision for the country and would share a common future with wisdom.

The Menteri Besar said the Johor BN and the state government valued the support and loyalty of the Indian community shown through the State MIC which had some 60,000 members in 500 branches covering 20 divisions with a total of nearly 50,000 voters.

"I am confident of the strong support from the Indian community and I can say their support for the government is probably 100 per cent," he said.

Abdul Ghani said that to the BN, the number of voters however small in any constituency was important for victory and the votes of the Indians who formed the minority in most constituencies was no less important.

"Indians are a minority but their support is very meaningful and equally important for us to win seats in the election...we are confident of the loyalty from the MIC leaders and members and the Indian community as a whole to the BN Government," the Menteri Besar said.

He did not mention the number of Parliamentary and state seats that would be created in Johor but indicated that there would be several new Parliamentary seats in view of the large constituencies with an increasing number of voters at present such as Tebrau which has nearly 100,000 voters, Pontian (nearly 80,000), Johor Baharu (nearly 90,000) and Kota Tinggi (close to 80,000)

He said with the rapid increase in population and voters, it was only appropriate that new seats are created.

Abdul Ghani also announced that the Johor Government had allocated an additional RM1 million to Tamil schools in Johor through the MIC as requested by these schools for development purposes.

"Two weeks ago, Dr Mahathir increased the allocation for Johor by RM10 million and he has no objection if I channelled RM 1 million to the Tamil schools," he said and expressed the hope that the money would meet the pressing needs of schools such as Hulu Tiram Tamil School.

He said some of the money could also be used by the MIC to meet the needs of temples in the state.

The Menteri Besar reminded the Indian community to take advantage of the facilities provided by the Johor Education Foundation for further studies and involve itself actively in Johor's rapid development.

-- BERNAMA

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