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Samy-Salaries

DR MAHATHIR WANTS DETAILED REPORT ON MONTHLY WAGES

KUALA LUMPUR, March 7 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has requested for a detailed report on the monthly wages for rubber estate workers, Works Minister Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu said today.

"I raised the matter at the Cabinet meeting yesterday and the Prime Minister wants a Cabinet paper with more detailed information on the proposal," he said.

Samy Vellu said he would provide the input needed by the Human Resource Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn so that a Cabinet paper with more details could be prepared for the Cabinet's attention.

"I believe and hope that soon the Malayan Agricultural Producers Association (MAPA) will give its attention to the plight of rubber estate workers in this country," said Samy, who is the MIC President, to reporters after chairing the party's Central Working Committee (CWC) meeting at party headquarters here.

Last month, Dr Fong had said his ministry would intervene in the negotiations between the National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW) and MAPA if the issue of monthly wages for rubber estate workers remained unresolved till mid March.

Samy Vellu said the rubber plantation sector was a strategic one in Malaysia and if attention was not given to it, the country would have to import even larger quantities of rubber from places like Thailand and Vietnam.

He said 61 per cent of rubber estate workers comprised Malaysians while the rest were foreigners.

Of the total number of Malaysians employed on the rubber estates, 51 per cent were Malays and 48 per cent were Indians.

Samy Vellu said a number of excuses put forward by MAPA such as the question of daily attendance for work could not be accepted because the oil palm plantation sector which implemented monthly wages last year did not encounter such problems.

He also said the CWC meeting had resolved to write to the Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamed and appeal to him to consider the MIC's request for full assistance for Tamil schools.

He said 35 per cent of the 522 Tamil schools were already receiving full government aid.

He said a special allocation would also be sought to build new Tamil schools and improve conditions in Tamil schools nationwide, "where conditions were inappropriate."

On the Ketari by-election, Samy Vellu said the MIC had set up five working groups under a single committee to enlist the support of the 907 Indian voters (5.22 per cent of the electorate) for the Barisan Nasional.

The Ketari seat is now vacant following the death of the BN assemblyman Datuk Loke Koon Kam on Sunday.

-- BERNAMA

RV AHH AAM