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Samy-MIC
MIC OPENED 600 NEW BRANCHES IN LAST TWO MONTHS, SAYS SAMY VELLU

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 29 (Bernama) -- The MIC has opened 600 new branches over the last two months, roping more than 63,000 Malaysian Indians into the party and bringing its membership to a grand total of 608,000, its president, Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, said today.

He said the party would open another 300 branches nationwide next year while plans were underway to absorb "a lot of members from another party but not a Barisan Nasional component party".

"We have opened 600 new branches, but we have given approval for the setting up of 900 branches. The remaining 300 branches will be set up after the MIC annual general assembly in May next year," he told reporters after the party's central working committee meeting at the MIC headquarters, here.

He said the party membership as of last year stood at 585,000 but 40,000 names were struck out for not paying annual subscription fees and with the inclusion of these 63,000 new members, the MIC membership had reached a new record of 608,000 members.

"In a day, we receive about eight to 10 applications from Malaysian Indians wanting to set up MIC branches. We have to vet these applications as we do not want too many branches as it would be difficult to handle," he added.

Samy Vellu also said that the party would hold its branch, divisional and national elections early next year. The MIC currently has about 4,000 branches with 125 divisions nationwide.

Branch nominations hade been fixed for Feb 2 and Feb 7-9 while the elections were slotted for the third week of February. For the divisions, nominations would be on March 7-9 and elections on March 21-24.

The party had also appointed a seven-member election steering committee, headed by MIC veteran Tan Sri G. Pasamanickam, which is now fine-tuning preparations for the party polls.

The national-level elections to pick the the top-level office bearers - would be held on May 17-18, he said, adding that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was expected to open the AGM.

For the first time in the party history, he said, the MIC would hold a separate election for the president's post and the tussle for the top post, if any, was expected to take place in February.

Last year, the party amended its constitution to allow for the more than 4,000 branch chairmen to elect the president. Previously the MIC president was elected by divisional delegates.

"The present term of the president will come to an end on May 27 and the party constitution requires that a presidential election be held three months before the term expires," Samy Vellu said.

He said the constitutional amendment also required the branches to hold elections for the posts of secretary and treasurer, which were previously filled through appointment by the branch chairmen.

"We found that the branch chairmen picked their allies to sit as the secretary and treasurer and this had caused a rift among members at branch level but now, with the election, anyone can contest," he added.

-- BERNAMA
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