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MIC TO INCREASE SUPPORT AMONG INDIANS

ALOR GAJAH, April 23 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), the third biggest component party in the Barisan Nasional (BN), hopes to garner the support of 90 per cent of Indians nationwide in the next general elections.

MIC President Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said MIC will implement several strategies to increase support among the Indian community for the BN party, including the introduction of several new candidates in the elections.

"These new faces are in several constituencies as we want to tap into 'new blood' to inject a breath of fresh air into the party," he told reporters after opening the MIC state convention at the A Famosa Resort here, last night.

Also present were the State MIC Chairman, who is also a state exco member, Datuk R. Raghavan as well as more than 200 MIC members from the other states.

Samy Vellu said, MIC found that in the 1999 elections, more than 85 per cent of the Indian community in Malaysia had supported BN candidates.

On increasing MIC seats in the next general elections following the recent redelineation exercise by the Election Commission (EC), Samy Vellu said the matter would be discussed with the BN Chairman, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and that it was not proper to discuss it with the media.

"It will be discussed when the time comes. MIC gained several seats after the redelineation exercise eight years ago and I hope MIC will be given new seats created under the present redelineation of electoral boundaries," he said.

In the last election MIC was allocated seven parliamentary and 13 state seats and it won all except for the Lunas state seat, lost to the Keadilan party in the Nov 2000 by-election.

On MIC Melaka, he said 14,643 out of the 39,500 Indians in the state were MIC members and that there were efforts to recruit another 6,000 new members this year.

He said MIC had helped many Indians, by way of academic assistance, building Tamil schools and tertiary institutions.

On the postponement of projects due to the global economic slowdown, Samy Vellu, who is the Minister of Works, said the ministry was waiting for a decision from the Economic Planning Unit (EPU).

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