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MIC-Identity

NEW MALAYSIAN INDIAN IDENTITY NEEDED, SAYS MIC PRESIDENT

KUALA LUMPUR, May 10 (Bernama) -- The emergence of a new Malaysian Indian identity is imperative for the sustainability of the community in modern Malaysia, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said today.

"This new Malaysian Indian is self-sustaining, possessing good education, competitive and capable of meeting the challenges ahead," he said.

Central to this new identity, he said, was the ability to shed the labour image to one which rekindled "our self worth in who we are, what we have accomplished and what we will achieve in the future."

"The last 20 years, the MIC has gradually attempted to forge a strong and distinct identity for the Indian community from what it was before.

"The MIC foresees and envisages a total restructuring, revamping and reorientation of the Malaysian Indian community to meet the challenges of the 21st century," he said in his presidential address at the MIC 57th annual general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here. The assembly was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and attended by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He said that for over 150 years, the Indian community had been identified as low-paid workers and labourers lacking in proper education and regarded as a race with a bleak future.

"We must change this image through planned efforts by providing an educational infrastructure for those from the low-income families in the community," he said.

Touching on the Tamil language and Tamil schools, Samy Vellu said that both were essential elements in the Malaysian Indian community.

"As an historical and cultural heritage which all Malaysians should be proud of, the existence of Tamil schools should be promoted and boosted through additional allocation," he said.

Samy Vellu said that the party had drawn up a strategic action plan including setting up a monitoring body under the National Action Council for Tamil Schools to improve the standard of Tamil schools in the country.

The MIC president said that the party acknowledged that there had been improvements in terms of educational infrastructure and quality of Tamil schools.

"Still, there are still aspects which are inadequate requiring improvements. The government, party and community must join forces to overcome all these and ensure that all Tamil schools are on par with the other schools," he said.

Turning to the MIC political position, he said that the party members and leaders should together face new challenges and seize all opportunities to improve the standard of living of the Malaysian Indian community.

He said that the election process at the branch level this year had revealed a high level of political maturity among the MIC members when there were contests in only 80 of the 4,300 branches.

"This reflected the understanding and cooperation which exist among the leaders. This environment allowed the leadership at all levels to conduct socio-political activities effectively," he said.

Samy Vellu said that it was the duty and responsibility of all MIC members to strive harder in the interest of the community and ensure that the people at the grass-root level benefit from all the opportunities available.

-- BERNAMA
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