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Subramaniam-MIC

BN COMPONENT PARTY LEADERS MUST RESPECT MIC LEADERSHIP - SUBRA

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 28 (Bernama) -- MIC Deputy President Datuk S. Subramaniam today asked Barisan Nasional (BN) component party leaders to respect and not to question the capabilities of MIC leaders.

Referring to the statement by the People's Progressive Party (PPP) President Datuk M. Kayveas that there was no leader in the MIC at present who could replace MIC President Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu's leadership, Subramaniam said it was an insulting statement and belittled the abilities of MIC members.

Subramaniam, who is also Deputy Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, said 600,000 MIC members and leaders at various levels of the party were a matured lot and experienced to choose their leader at the right time and situation.

"If the PPP President wants to praise the MIC President, it's appropriate and good.

"But if he wants to say there is no leader (in the MIC to replace Samy Vellu), that is a mischievous thinking to tarnish the party's image and to belittle 600,000 party members," he told a media conference at his office.

Kayveas said on Sunday that Samy Vellu was the only calibre leader to lead the Indian community at the moment.

Last week, Indian Progressive Front (IPF) President Datuk M.G. Pandithan asked Samy Vellu to step down following the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that veteran leaders of BN component parties should make way for younger leaders to take over.

Subramaniam, commenting on the statements by Kayveas and Pandithan, said all quarters, especially MIC members, should stop speculating on the leadership change in the MIC.

"Dr Mahathir gave his advice in general. What is important is that everyone must give their support to the country's leadership," he said.

He said the country was at a crucial period with Dr Mahathir handing over the premiership to his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Friday.

"The important advice is what the Prime Minister gave in general. Others merely gave their views and that is not important.

"What's important is that the Prime Minister, who has vast experience and has brought impressive progress and development as the leader who has led BN for 22 years. His advice, that is important," he said.

Subramaniam said every member of BN component parties must give solid support to Abdullah and also in preparation for the coming general election which could be held at anytime.

Malaysia will hold the 11th general election next year as the government's mandate ends on Nov 20, 2004.

Asked to comment on his silence following Pandithan's statement asking Samy Vellu to step down, he said: There's nothing for me to say. The advice was given by the Prime Minister.

"Those who want to reply or give their opinions, it's up to them. I've nothing to say," he said.

On the statement by Pandithan that IPF could join the BN if MIC was led by Subramaniam, he said taking over the party's leadership was speculation.

"We will cross the bridge when we come to it," he said.

Subramaniam said the entry of IPF, a splinter party of MIC, into BN was decided by the component parties and not MIC.

Pandithan had alleged that the main stumbling block for his party to be admitted into the BN was Samy Vellu.

Subramaniam also urged MIC members at all levels of the party to stop speculating on the party's leadership.

-- BERNAMA

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