

02 FEB 2004
Samy-Schools
MIC TO SUBMIT WORKING PAPER ON TAMIL SCHOOLS

PETALING JAYA , Feb 2 (Bernama) -- The MIC will submit a working paper to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi requesting an annual grant of RM20 million, over the next 10 years, to upgrade and refurbish 180 Tamil schools nationwide.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said: "We used to get grants for this purpose but not on an annual basis. Over the last two years we did not receive any aid for the upgrading of Tamil schools."

Samy Vellu, who is Works Minister, said he raised the matter in the middle of last year when Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was in power but was told by the former prime minister to refer the request to Abdullah, who was appointed prime minister on Oct 31.

"The prime minister (Abdullah) has asked me to send the details to him. We have 180 Tamil schools and most are in poor condition," he told reporters after opening the new building of the Effingham Tamil School in Bandar Utama here today.

He said Tamil schools would not be able to improve their infrastructure if they only hoped and waited for assistance from the Education Ministry.

"If we get the grant, we will be able to remedy at least 20 Tamil schools a year and over the 10 years, all the schools which are in poor condition will benefit. But we don't know if our request will be granted. If not, then we have to come up with an alternative plan to repair the schools," he said.

On another note, he said the MIC would operate from its new headquarters in Bandar Utama within the next five to six years.

The party had obtained a 1.2ha site beside the Effingham Tamil school for a total of RM13 million for its headquarters, he said.

"We will have a proper plan for the proposed headquarters in two years. Once the building is completed we will adopt the Effingham Tamil

school,"
he added.

He also said that the party would start holding its state election machinery convention on Feb 8 in Perak, followed by Penang (Feb 14), Negeri Sembilan (Feb 15), Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur (Feb 15), Pahang (Feb 22) and Johor (Feb 29).

Abdullah was scheduled to deliver a speech at the Penang State Election Machinery Convention, he added.

-- BERNAMA

SR VP RV JK