

**Najib: Palanivel to be made full minister**  
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today announced that he will appoint MIC president G Palanivel as minister in the Prime Minister's Department, thus giving the Indian-based party two full ministerial posts.

This announcement came at MIC's 65th annual general meeting (AGM) at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) today.

"I am going back to Tun Razak's time when there were two Indians in the cabinet.

"(Palanivel, left) will be sworn in soon," said Najib to deafening cheers and a lengthy standing ovation from about 4,000 delegates and observers.

He added that the Agong has already consented to the decision.

"Soon (swearing in). We are waiting for Yang di-Pertuan Agong to come back, probably next week. We will get the date from Yang di-Pertuan Agong," he said.

The other MIC minister in Najib's cabinet is Human Resources Minister Dr S Subramaniam, who is the party's deputy president.

For over two decades, former MIC president S Samy Vellu has been the sole party representative in the ruling BN coalition's cabinet.

**Quid pro quo deal**

Palanivel, who is a senator, lost his Hulu Selangor parliamentary seat in 2008 after serving as MP for four consecutive terms.

After being sworn in as senator, he was subsequently made plantation industries and commodities deputy minister.

It is learnt that MIC is giving up two deputy minister posts in return for an additional seat in the cabinet.

The other deputy minister post was held by former PPP leader T Murugiah, who joined MIC following a leadership tussle. His senatorship expired three months ago.

Najib's announcement came at the tailend of his keynote address where he said the government is willing to enter into a "quid pro quo" agreement with the MIC for Indian support.

"I heard you loud and clear. (Palanivel in his earlier policy speech) gave the assurance that if the government can solve the Indian problem, the Indians will support BN," he said.

**No comment on apology to PSM 6**

Commenting on the announcement at a press conference later, Najib confirmed that MIC is "trading in two deputy ministerships for a full ministership".

The premier added that an announcement of Palanivel's portfolio will be made later.

The PM, was, however, evasive when asked if this meant that there will be a cabinet reshuffle soon.

Asked if this was a ploy to attract Indian votes ahead of possible snap polls, the PM said: "No, no, no....this is to appreciate the contributions of the Indian community, by giving (community leaders) a

greater role," he said.

In an immediate reaction, Palanivel said he was "both shocked and surprised by the sudden announcement".

"I wasn't pursuing this... MIC has been asking, the Indians have been asking but I never asked the PM (for the job).

"After many years, the community has gotten back what it wanted. This is a historic move," he said.

He added he had always "worked like a full minister" even when he was just an ordinary MP or a deputy minister and will continue to work hard.

On a separate matter, Najib refused to comment on calls for a government apology to the six PSM activists free yesterday evening from detention under the Emergency Ordinance after 28 days.

"Don't bring up other issues," he snapped at reporters.

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