

Najib says it's MIC but leaves Palanivel in limbo
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Prime Minister Najib Razak has today confirmed that the BN candidate for the crucial Hulu Selangor by-election will come from the MIC.

"The Hulu Selangor seat will be contested by a candidate from MIC because this is a MIC seat," he told the first Selangor BN convention in Shah Alam.

NONE However, he fell short of endorsing G Palanivel, the man who was suggested by MIC president S Samy Vellu, giving to rise speculation that he could be bumped off the list.

"Let's leave it to the BN chairperson to decide on the candidate," said Najib, who is also BN chief.

The prime minister urged everyone in BN to give full support to the eventual candidate.

"I don't want opposition from any component party. I want us to win as BN. If we lose, not only MIC will lose, BN too," he said to a roar of applause among the 1,500 state grassroots leaders who turned up for the meeting.

Najib also told the participants to stop speculating on who the BN candidate will be.

"Give your trust and confidence in me as the BN president. I will talk to all parties, including the MIC president, to determine the best candidate," he said.

'We accept whatever he says'

Najib called on all component members to close ranks to ensure a BN victory.

NONE "Don't think about it (the candidate) anymore. Just think about doing your work. Do not be lazy," he said.

In an immediate reaction, Hulu Selangor Umno vice-president Adnan Buyong said that his division would accept Najib's decision.

"The leader has made the announcement. Whatever he say, we will have to accept."

He said that local leaders have already given their strong views on fielding an Umno candidate.

"Najib may have done his own research," he said.

Speaking to reporters after the function, Najib refused to divulge if there were other choices apart from Palanivel.

"It is an internal discussion. We will not discuss it openly," he said.

Palanivel spotted at convention

NONE It has been rumoured that MIC president S Samy Vellu's top choice for the seat is

Palanivel (right), who was also spotted at the BN convention shaking hands.

He is a former four-term MP for the Hulu Selangor before defeat in the 2008 general elections, may face an uphill task convincing Najib to endorse him.

Sources said that other names that will be nominated now includes MIC information chief P Kamalanathan and deputy Youth chief V Mugilan, known to be aligned to vice-president Dr S Subramaniam.

It is understood that Subramaniam has been quietly endorsing Mugilan since Palanivel's entry into the Parliament may cost Subramaniam his cabinet position as human resources minister.

Najib appeared upbeat when asked about the coalition's chances in the by-election, saying that the voters sentiment was leaning towards BN.

"But there will be other factors. In by-elections, the focus is more on the candidates instead of national issues."

He however refusing to elaborate more on the "BN Selangor Takeover Plan", apart from saying that next on the plan is mere "hard work".

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