

**DAP Perak rep U-turns hours after quitting
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In a dramatic turnaround, newly-elected Buntong state assemblyperson A Sivasubramaniam has retracted his resignation from DAP hours after he made the announcement today. MCPX

His sudden resignation would have affected the tenuous grip on power by the DAP-PKR-PAS coalition, giving it only a one-seat majority over the Barisan Nasional opposition.

Sivasubramaniam's about-turn was announced at a hastily-organised press conference at 6pm in Ipoh.

buntong sivasubramaniam dap perak 310308Sivasubramaniam's decision to quit seven hours earlier was due to his unhappiness over the party's allocation of only one position to an Indian in the state cabinet, the executive council.

Contacted by Malaysiakini this evening, Sivasubramaniam said he retracted his resignation after state leaders have assured him that there would be other opportunities for Indians in the state administration.

He said that he had settled the matter amicably after speaking to both party leader Lim Guan Eng and DAP Perak chief Ngeh Khoo Ham earlier today.

However, he defended his earlier decision to quit because the exco lineup which was announced on Saturday had disappointed the Indian community who had staunchly backed DAP, PKR and PAS.

"I received many calls and SMSes yesterday saying that the Indians had been sidelined again," he said.

ngeh koo hamHe said he had queried Ngeh (left) on the matter yesterday but was merely told "an announcement would be made later", prompting him to submit his resignation this morning.

"I couldn't wait any more, so I handed in my resignation. But the situation was only explained to me today. If this was done earlier, there wouldn't have been this problem," he added.

"I believe what I've done today is a plus-point for the Indians," he stressed, when asked if he regretted his move to hand in his resignation letter.

In view of the latest development, Sivasubramaniam also apologised for causing uneasiness to the public, the Buntong electorate, the party and the media.

An Indian for assembly's speaker

Meanwhile, Ngeh told Malaysiakini that the resignation scare was the result of a misunderstanding.

Contrary to Sivasubramaniam's claims, Ngeh said that the state government plans to equitably allocate important positions to the Indian community.

buntong perak results 310308This includes the nomination of an Indian to fill the state assembly speaker's post. It is unclear whether Sivasubramaniam would be "rewarded" the post after his U-turn today.

"Out of respect for the state assembly, I could not announce it. When he asked about why only one Indian was given an exco post, I told there would be further announcements.

"Unfortunately, he misunderstood and thought that we behaved like Barisan, and would allocate only one exco post for the Indians.

"I have contacted him and clarified the matter and he agreed that the Indians are well represented," said Ngeh.

Ngeh urged the public and party members not to judge the party's leadership prematurely, adding that there are a host of vacancies which needs to be filled.

He assured that all groups would be given due consideration, including minority groups and women.

However, Ngeh refused to reveal the name of the person nominated for the speaker's post.

In a letter to DAP secretary-general Guan Eng earlier today, Sivasubramaniam claimed that Ngeh had reneged on a promise to appoint two exco members from the Indian community.

"This is a major blow and lie to the Perak Indian community," Sivasubramaniam wrote, according to a copy of the letter that was made available this morning to Malaysiakini. [See letter]

He stressed that DAP's electoral victories in Perak were the result of makkal sakthi ('people's power' in Tamil), which has been the rallying cry for Indian Malaysians who felt marginalised by the BN government.

Buntong is a state seat where nearly 50 percent of voters are from the Indian community. Sivasubramaniam won with 10,311 votes - double that of his opponent Lee Tung Lai of MCA.

Hanging by a thread

Had Sivasubramaniam departed from the party, the DAP-PKR-PAS coalition state government would be hanging by a thread with only 30 seats against the BN opposition's 29 in the 59-seat state assembly.

narrow majority in perak 310308The loose ruling coalition currently holds a three-seat 31-28 majority.

Sivasubramaniam's decision came hot in the heels after he was left out from the new exco line-up.

The new exco members were sworn in last Saturday, with the sole Indian in the team being

Sungkai assemblyperson A Sivanesan.

This sparked rumours of a protest rally - purportedly to be held in Ipoh yesterday morning, although it did not materialise.

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