

**Najib wants MIC leaders to close ranks**  
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Prime Minister Najib Razak wants the MIC leaders who had won in the party election today to close ranks and regain the support of the Indian community in the country.

He congratulated G Palanivel for retaining the post of MIC deputy president as well as the other MIC leaders, adding that the result was not surprising and had been expected.

"The result that was announced had been expected. There were no surprises although support for the other candidates was rather strong.

"Nonetheless, based on my speech this morning, I believe this is the beginning of their efforts to win the support and heart of the Indian community," he told reporters after attending a breaking of the fast and handing over of Hari Raya contributions at the Masjid Felda Chini 4, Pekan this evening.

Palanivel defeated former MIC deputy president S Subramaniam and former vice-president S Sothinathan in the MIC election.

Najib, who is also BN chief, said the elected leaders must give their full concentration to ensure that the MIC could rise up again as a relevant party and subsequently support the BN particularly in areas where the Indian community formed the majority.

Asked to comment whether the result reflected the support for MIC president S Samy Vellu, Najib said: "The result was expected because of the nature of the MIC delegates."

Asked whether the result would cause a split among the MIC members, Najib said that the losers must accept the decision.

What was more important was solidarity in the MIC to face a bigger challenge, that is, to win the hearts of the Indian community, he said.

"What is important now is for the present leaders to meet the aspirations of the Indian voters. They must know the needs and requirements of the Indian community, must be prepared to do whatever it takes to win their support," he said.

**Economy to pick up again**

Earlier in his speech, Najib said the national economy was expected to register positive growth in the fourth quarter of the year after registering negative growth during the first three-quarters of the year.

He said the various measures introduced by the government including the stimulus package worth more than RM67 billion and the commitment of the people had succeeded in realising the national economic recovery.

For example, Najib said, with the improved economy, Felda settlers would also receive more good news including a bonus if Felda succeeded to maintain its excellent performance.

He later presented Hari Raya contributions to more than 3,000 recipients including single mothers, senior citizens and orphans.

- *Bernama*

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