

Palanivel Appointed Minister, Says Najib
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PUTRAJAYA -- Najib Tun Razak on Saturday announced that MIC president G.Palanivel has been appointed as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

The announcement was made by the prime minister when he opened MIC's 65th general assembly at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) here.

"Now MIC has to deliver and we (government) can deliver to show our sincerity. And in line with our commitment to work closely with the Indian community, I proposed to make G.Palanivel full minister," he said.

Prior to the announcement, Palanivel was Deputy Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister.

Palanivel was appointed as a Senator in the middle of last year. In the 2008 general election, he failed to defend the Hulu Selangor parliamentary seat.

Najib said Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin had given his consent to the appointment and that the swearing in was expected to be done next week.

"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.

Speaking to reporters later, the prime minister said he would announce Palanivel's new duties and portfolio after the latter was sworn in as minister.

Najib said the full ministership was a trade off for the two deputy minister posts reserved for the MIC, which were now vacant.

One was the post being vacated by Palanivel and the other, the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's post that was held by T. Murugiah which has yet to be filled.

Asked if the move was part of the Barisan Nasional's strategy in facing the next general election, Najib said having two ministers from the MIC had been practised when his late father Abdul Razak Hussein was prime minister.

"I want to return to the era of Tun Razak where there were two Indian ministers in the Cabinet," he said.

He said the decision was also proof of the government's commitment to the Indian community.

"In appreciation of the role played by the Indian community, the community can play a more effective role by having two full ministers," he said.

Before Palanivel's appointment, the MIC was represented in the Cabinet by its deputy president S. Subramaniam, who is Human Resource Minister.

Asked if a Cabinet reshuffle was imminent following Palanivel's appointment as minister, Najib said: "I don't know. Today is just one announcement."

(Bernama)

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