

**Najib Is Serious In Continuing Efforts To Uplift Indian Community's Lot - Experts  
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By Chandravathani Sathasivam**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 20 (Bernama) -- The appointment of Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) chairman P.Waythamoorthy as a deputy minister reflects the commitment and seriousness of the government in continuing its efforts to uplift the Indian community.

For the first time, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has brought a representative from an Indian non-governmental organisation, into his cabinet to help bring positive change to the Indian community's socio-economic position.

Hindraf, which was once anti-government, had on April 18 signed a memorandum of understanding with Barisan Nasional, with six key points, aimed at bringing poor Indians into the country's mainstream development.

HELP University senior lecturer Dr K.Harikrishan said the government was looking seriously into the Indian community's dilemma, and hoped with the appointment of Waythamoorthy, it would ensure that all problems plaguing the community would be solved.

He noted that the community, especially the younger generation, would like to see some permanent changes in stateless issues as well as job and business opportunities, which had been neglected.

"With this appointment, we hope that Waythamoorthy will keep to his word by bringing a new wave of hope to the Indian community. Today, the whole responsibility lies on his shoulder and MIC to ensure all promises are kept," he said.

The appointment though was criticised by several individuals, including Waythamoorthy's own brother, Uthayakumar, who claims to be Hindraf's leader, for accepting the cabinet post and called him a political opportunist.

However, Hindraf advisor N. Ganesan, lambasted the critics, saying that Najib needed individuals or organisations to deliver the transformation needed for the Indian community.

On Saturday, Waythamoorthy, who has been appointed deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said he would focus on displaced estate workers, stateless people, education, and business and job opportunities for the community.

Assoc Prof Dr Sivamurugan Pandian of Universiti Sains Malaysia said Waythamoorthy had a big responsibility now to translate all that were listed in the blueprint into action.

"I believe those who swung back to BN will watch closely his plans and achievements. I think it is a duty of all the Indian elected representatives to focus on issues related to minorities, including the tasks given under the special unit to monitor Indian community-related policies," he said.

The head of the Department of Indian Studies at Universiti Malaya, Prof Dr S. Kumaran hoped the selection of six representatives from the Indian community, would contribute successfully to taking the community to a higher level.

"The appointment of Waythamoorthy was unexpected. So, he should be wise to use this opportunity to show his dedication to develop the Indian community so that they continue to trust him as a pillar of leadership," he said.

Meanwhile, the appointment of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) Penang chairman Datuk Loga Bala Mohan as Deputy Federal Territories Minister is also expected to bring about improvements and positive changes to the lives of the Indian community, especially in the urban areas.

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