

Vell Paari says boycotting Perak government will be 'detrimental' to MIC
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By Boo Su-Lyn

KUALA LUMPUR, June 10 — MIC strategy director S. Vell Paari urged party president Datuk Seri G. Palanivel today not to be hasty in rejecting positions in the Perak government for the MIC, saying that it would be "detrimental" to the party.

Palanivel, however, insisted today that the Speaker post in Perak belongs to the MIC, as he sought to clarify his remarks last Saturday that his party would not accept any executive councillor position in the Umno-dominated state government, nor appointments as special officer and adviser to the menteri besar, if the Speaker post was not awarded to a party leader.

"If we don't accept these positions, then the Perak state government will appoint someone else outside of MIC similar to the appointment of Waythamoorthy," said Vell Paari in a statement emailed to The Malaysian Insider today, referring to Hindraf chairman P. Waythamoorthy, who is also deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

"This will be detrimental to MIC," he added.

Vell Paari said the "MIC is not MCA", pointing out that the latter could afford to refuse government posts because the Chinese community is "economically sound" and has wealthy NGOs to call on for assistance.

"So let's not punish or deprive our MIC leaders, members and community in Perak for the sake of the Speaker position," he said.

"I am told that the Perak government is not happy with our choice for Speaker. If that is the case, we can give other names to choose from. But if the Speaker position is not available, then let us ask something that will enhance or benefit the Indians in Perak," added Vell Paari.

He also said an extraordinary general meeting should be called to make a decision by consensus for such a major issue.

Palanivel said in a separate statement today that he was not "threatening anyone", stressing that the MIC merely wanted back the Speaker post.

The Cameron Highlands MP reminded Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir from Umno that it was the Indian electorate that buoyed Barisan Nasional (BN) to victory in the silver state in Election 2013.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) won Perak in Election 2008 and gave the post of Speaker to then Tronoh assemblyman V. Sivakumar — the first Indian in the state to be given such a position.

Palanivel said last Saturday that the MIC's central working committee will meet on June 18 to discuss the matter, along with other issues related to the coming party elections.

The party chief added that the issue has also been raised with Prime Minister Datuk Seri

Najib Razak and Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, an Umno vice-president and an MP in Perak.

BN retained power in Perak last month after a heated polls contest that saw it in a neck-and-neck race with opponents PR over the 15-day campaign period.

The ruling coalition scraped through the May 5 general polls with a razor-thin majority of just three seats in Perak, winning 31 seats to PR's 28 in the state's 59-seat assembly.

In Perak, the MIC currently has one parliamentary seat — Tapah — which was won by its vice-president Datuk M. Saravanan.

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