

## **Najib revives Cabinet Committee on Indian Affairs**

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PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak has revived the Cabinet Committee on Indian Affairs and the committee made up of MIC top guns will meet at the Prime Minister's office today for its first meeting in three years.

The meeting will be attended by MIC president and Natural Resources and Environment Minister G Palanivel, Health Minister and MIC deputy president Dr S Subramaniam, Youth and Sports deputy minister M Saravanan, who is also MIC vice-president and P Kamalanathan, the deputy Education minister and MIC central working committee member.

The chief secretary to the government Ali Hamsa will also be in attendance.

The cabinet committee on Indian Affairs became dormant after Palanivel took over the MIC presidency from former president S Samy Vellu in 2010.

Questions are now being asked why the Prime Minister revived this committee at this time? Is Najib unhappy with the way the MIC president has been running things in the party in serving the community? Or is it due to the resignation of P Waythamoorthy as deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Sources say the answer to both the questions was a resounding 'yes'.

"It is a bit of both. Palanivel has forgotten what he needs to do to win back the community. Nothing is moving in the MIC. The party has come to a stand still in addressing problems of the Indian community," said a source in the Prime Minister's office.

Hindraf's Waythamoorthy was made deputy minister after he signed a memorandum of understanding with the government before the last general election

He was entrusted to look into Indian affairs but resigned abruptly last month saying that Najib did not have the will to walk the talk as far as Indians are concerned.

"The revival of the committee also shows that the Prime Minister intends to deal with Indian issues on his own. He is not letting MIC tackle these issues on their own because the party is not doing anything. Nothing has happened after the general election. This meeting would kickstart programmes for the community," he said.

Among issues to be discussed at the meeting today would be the plight of Tamil schools, seats available for Indian students in public and private higher learning institutions, issuance of MyKad and birth certificates for Malaysian Indians and creation of more job opportunities for Indian in

the government.

The cabinet committee will also deliberate on skills training and economic empowerment of Indian youth, construction and refurbishing of temples and community halls.

The government had in 2010 awarded RM100 million to upgrade Tamil schools in the country. The announcement was made in the 2011 Budget tabling by Najib in Parliament.

“This proposal was put up by Samy Vellu and SK Devamany (former deputy minister and ex-MIC vice-president). Najib decided to approve this and made the announcement. But since then MIC has been dragging its feet and this is alarming the Prime Minister.

“This is why he has taken it upon himself to look into this matter. He wants aid and assistance to reach the community fast. He is speeding things up but can the party keep up with this speed is another matter,” said the source.

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