

Reach out to Indian community, Malaysian PM tells MIC

Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak Saturday urged the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) to reach out to the Indian community and regain the support it had lost in the elections in March last year.

Addressing the 63rd general assembly of the party that has traditionally spoken for the nearly two million Indian community in Malaysia, Razak told the MIC leaders that they will have to get the support of the people. This, he said, would determine the party's 'key performance index (KPI)'.

In response, MIC's long-time chief S. Samy Vellu said the MIC could not deliver the expectations of the Indian community individually as it needed the government's intervention.

Although Vellu was not referring to any particular situation, the MIC has in recent times been blamed for not doing much for the ethnic Indians.

Vellu himself lost his ninth bid at re-election to parliament.

The MIC could only recommend action plans for the Indians but it needed the government's intervention to implement them, Vellu was quoted as saying by NST Online, the website of New Straits times.

Razak told the MIC leaders it was 'not enough to be popular only within the party', an apparent reference to the internecine warfare within the organization that has been on the increase since the party's tally in parliament came down to three from 16 last year.

The party leaders must not be 'arrogant', The Star quoted him as saying.

Vellu proposed that the intake of Indians into the civil service be expedited to achieve the 7.4 percent quota for Indians set by the government.

'We also would like to seek the assistance of the government to instruct government-linked companies to provide adequate employment opportunities for Indians. We are also aware that many Indians are employed on contract basis; hence, we urge the government to ensure they are absorbed as permanent staff,' Vellu said.

MIC is part of the Razak-led Barisan Nasional (BN) ruling coalition. Under Razak's predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the BN had lost its traditional two-thirds parliamentary majority and control of five of the 13 states.

Malaysia is a multi-racial society of majority Malay Muslims, with a significant population of ethnic Chinese and Indians. The Indians form nearly eight percent of the 28 million population.

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