

IPF played vital role, says PM

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'Party helped enhance image of BN'

By Ramlan Said and Annie Freeda Cruz

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — The Indian Progressive Front has played a positive role in enhancing the image of Barisan Nasional, especially among the Indian community, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said it had worked hard to help the Barisan Nasional during the recent general election although it was not a member of the coalition.

"The spirit shown by IPF has been well-received by all BN component parties," he said in the souvenir programme of the party's ninth general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre on Sunday.

Dr Mahathir expressed hope that the IPF, under the leadership of Datuk M.G. Pandithan, would continue to support all BN policies as well as face challenges together.

The Prime Minister also praised the party for the success in overcoming various challenges since its inception.

Dr Mahathir said in today's challenging political scenario, it was vital that in developing the country, all levels of society strove towards maintaining unity and strengthen-

ing co-operation among each other.

"We must realise that only stability can ensure peace and prosperity of the country and its multi-racial community. The BN Government will ensure that all development programmes be implemented smoothly and benefits the people."

Meanwhile, Pandithan said gaining personal political mileage or entry into People's Progressive Party was not in his agenda as his main priority was to ensure the well-being of party members.

"Why all the fuss about me? I am not important but to me the well-being of party members is important," he said when commenting on People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas' decision to only invite IPF members and not Pandithan into the party.

"I can only thank them for making their stand clear. My concern is only for my members. I am not worried about myself."

Reserving comments on the issue, Pandithan said his future as IPF president would be decided by the party's 2,949 delegates during its ninth general assembly this Sunday.

The delegates are from 100 IPF divisions besides 250 from the Youth and another 250 from the Wanita

wings.

The assembly will be opened by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"I will in no way influence the members. They will make the decision, whether right or wrong they will have to face it," he said.

Pandithan, who would not be casting his ballot, said he would abide by the decision made by the delegates.

He added there would be some 1,000 observers at the assembly including a few from their two branches in Kota Kinabalu and Labuan.

He said delegates would be tabling some 10 resolutions with the main one being pledging their undivided support and loyalty to Barisan Nasional and its leaders, especially Dr Mahathir and Abdullah.

Pandithan said they would also urge the Government to take proactive measures to teach Mathematics and Science in Bahasa Malaysia in Tamil schools as many of them perform badly when they joined remove classes.

"The Education Ministry should seriously conduct a study why Tamil school pupils do not excel in their UPSR examinations resulting in many dropping out."