

Pandithan: Decision on party's future in PM's hands

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He added that the decision would be relayed to Barisan chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and other component parties.

Pandithan said he would leave the decision and future of IPF in the hands of Dr Mahathir.

"Our future is in the hands of Dr Mahathir. Whatever he says, we will do," he said, adding that the decision showed that the delegates were not keen in joining any other party.

Pandithan said a letter would also be sent to the Barisan leadership.

Later at a press conference, Pandithan said IPF had received good support and co-operation from all component parties except MIC.

"We will continue to knock on the Barisan door until it opens. All the component parties are not opposing us except for Samy Vellu. We are hoping that he will change his stand as the political situation is alarming now," he said.

In his opening speech in the morning, Pandithan took a dig at Samy Vellu, likening him to a security guard blocking IPF's entry into

IPF delegates say no to invitation by MIC, PPP

By A. LETCHUMANAN

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KUALA LUMPUR: In an apparent snub, the Indian Progressive Front (IPF) delegates voted overwhelmingly yesterday to turn down the MIC and People's Progressive Party's invitation for its members to dissolve the party and join them.

After the votes were counted, 2,945 delegates of the 12-year-old party opted to remain in the party while one each voted for the MIC and PPP.

IPF president Datuk M.G. Pandithan abstained and there were two spoilt votes.

He said he remained neutral to avoid influencing the decision of the delegates.

The delegates were required to mark one of the three party symbols in the voting slip in the referendum, which was held following the invitation from MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu on Jan 22.

The voting, which began at 12.30pm, was completed in two hours

and counting began at 3pm in front of 20 local journalists.

In an immediate response, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu "congratulated" Pandithan for a "well-staged drama."

After IPF vice-president Dr Harcharan Singh made the announcement at 5pm, the delegates erupted into cheers before Pandithan was garlanded and carried by the supporters.

In his speech, Pandithan said he was touched by the delegates' decision and promised to continue to fight to uplift the standard of the down-trodden Indian community.

"I will fight until my last breath for IPF. I will not let you down. I will not return to MIC or join the PPP ever again.

"Be patient and we will make it one day. If it is not today or tomorrow, one day we will be in Barisan Nasional," he said.

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Barisan.

"We were invited to join Barisan. Nearly half of our body is already inside but we are blocked from going in by a security guard.

"I hope Dr Mahathir can use his remote control to

clear the problem," he said to thunderous applause from the crowd.

Pandithan said he was willing to meet Samy Vellu for the sake of unity of the Indian community, but this did not mean there must be

one party to represent the community.

"We can be like brothers who are married and living in separate houses. We can have better relations if we stay in separate houses," he said.