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Mahathir-MIC

UMNO LAUDS MIC'S OVERTURE TO IPF, SAYS MAHATHIR

JITRA, Jan 25 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Umno welcomed the MIC's overture to have the breakaway Indian Progressive Front (IPF) president Datuk M G Pandithan and followers back into to the MIC fold.

"The MIC move is set to reunite Indians in the country," he told reporters when approached on the matter after attending an AidilFitri get-together organised by the Kubang Pasu Umno Youth here today.

Dr Mahathir, who is Kubang Pasu Umno division chief and the MP for the constituency, was commenting on MIC president Datuk Seri S Samy Vellu's open invitation last Tuesday to Pandithan and his followers to rejoin the MIC.

Pandithan was an MIC vice president when he was sacked in December 1988 following a rift with Samy Vellu and formed the IPF two years later.

The IPF, despite repeated attempts to join the Barisan Nasional since 1995, could not gain entry as a BN component mainly because of MIC's objection then.

Dr Mahathir described Samy Vellu's decision to accept Pandithan back and willingness to accord him good treatment as a wise move.

"We could not accept the IPF into the BN all these years because there must be a consensus among all of the component parties. Only then can we accept any new party.

"As such, despite the IPF longing to join the BN and has long been supporting the BN during general elections, it is unfortunate that it could not be accepted as a BN member. If the IPF joins the MIC, things will be much easier for us," he said.

Asked whether Malaysian Indians are also divided, Dr Mahathir said: "If they are not united, it means they are divided. The MIC is Indian and so also is the IPF.

-- BERNAMA

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