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Mahathir-IPF

BN APPRECIATES IPF'S SUPPORT, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 24 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed the hope that the Indian Progressive Front (IPF) will continue to support the Barisan Nasional (BN) in the ruling coalition's efforts to bring greater progress and development to the country.

"Although the IPF is not a BN component party, the spirit and dedication of IPF members and leaders in supporting the BN are very commendable and much appreciated," the Prime Minister said in his message in the souvenir programme of the 10th IPF general assembly here.

The assembly was opened by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here today.

Dr Mahathir said the IPF's gesture showed that the party appreciated the BN's success in administering the country and was thankful for the good life Malaysians were enjoying.

"Not many parties outside the BN could appreciate (BN's efforts) and take a positive attitude to support the BN like what the IPF is doing," he said.

"It cannot be denied that the IPF has helped a lot in BN's success in the general elections or by-elections, through the involvement of its members in campaigning," said Dr Mahathir, who is the BN chairman.

IPF, led by Datuk M.G.Pandithan, had applied to join the BN several times but was unsuccessful because its bid was objected to by certain parties.

Under BN regulations, any party wishing to join the coalition must have the blessings of all the 14 component parties.

Meanwhile, Abdullah acknowledged that IPF was still committed to the BN struggle and wanted to join the coalition.

Asked when IPF's wish to join the BN could be fulfilled, he said: "That I cannot give a clear answer."

"I fully understand that IPF is still committed to the BN struggle and wants to join it. We appreciate this but, as we all know, a decision by consensus is needed to admit any new party," he told reporters after opening the assembly.

"So, while there are those (component parties) who support, maybe there are others who do not support (IPF's application to join the BN)," he said.

Abdullah believed that there was room for another Indian party to join the BN, which already has the MIC.

"If the BN agrees then there is room but at the moment this seems to be the argument (that there is no room for other Indian-based parties). At the same time, there are component parties that feel IPF can be given admission, but due to the consensus system we have to stick to the procedures we have been practising," he said.

-- BERNAMA

SR RW AZZ YBY