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DPM: Some not in favour of admitting IPF into the BN

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Indian Progressive Front (IPF) cannot be admitted into the Barisan Nasional as some of its members are not in favour of such a move, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

"In the BN you cannot make unilateral decisions as every BN member must agree to the inclusion.

"But, whatever it is, we in the BN appreciate IPF's support and hardwork. I just hope that they would be patient," said Abdullah after opening the IPF's 10th annual general assembly at Dewan Merdeka in Putra World Trade Centre here.

Earlier in his address to a packed audience of IPF members and officials in Merdeka Hall, Abdullah gave an assurance that the Government had never neglected the rural poor.

He said that funds worth millions of ringgit had been set up to uplift the status of the rural folks, irrespective of their background.

"It is not true that the Government assists one particular group, we care for all of you," Abdullah said to a thunderous applause.

Abdullah, who is also BN deputy chairman, said that apart from rural folk, there was also a specific focus to eradicate urban poverty, something which has been closely linked to urban social decadence.

"We must all work together as a family to solve this matter, the problem is not confined to any particular race...it is our problem," he said.

Abdullah reiterated the fact that Malaysia cannot be possibly ruled by any one race though this group forms the majority.

"The power-sharing concept of BN will always be relevant because we are a unique society with the interest of all at heart." IPF president Datuk M.G. Pandithan criticised the MIC for being uncompromising and blocking IPF's application to be admitted into the BN.

He said the MIC should adopt a more open approach regarding the matter.

Pandithan said MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu should realise that IPF's membership in BN could strengthen the Indian community in the country as both parties could work together to upgrade the living standards of Indians.

"I do not understand why MIC is opposing us. They should look at the future of the Indians and co-operate with us as IPF is willing to work with anyone," he told a Press conference after the opening of the assembly.

"The presence of Abdullah at our assembly today and the endorsement by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad shows that they are concerned about us and appreciate our support for BN.

"For us to be accepted into BN, there must be a consensus among all the BN component parties and although it is only one party which is objecting to our entry, the others cannot do anything to change this."

Pandithan said that he was puzzled by Samy Vellu's stand to agree with the invitation by Dr Mahathir to Opposition parties to join BN but at the same time oppose IPF which was a strong supporter of the coalition.

Pandithan also hit out at Samy Vellu for not responding to IPF's invitation to send a message to be included in the souvenir programme book published in conjunction with the general assembly.

"We respect him (Samy Vellu) as the leader of a BN component party and that was why we issued the invitation to him, all other BN component party heads and Menteris Besar. They all accepted our invitation except Samy

Vellu."

On the action by a group of disgruntled former IPF members to form a new party named IPF (Baru), Pandithan replied: "These people are mentally sick and merely acting as agent. We know who is behind all these."

Former IPF Youth secretary M.P Segaran yesterday announced the formation of IPF (Baru) and said that an application would be submitted to the Registrar of Societies (RoS) tomorrow.

Present at the assembly were BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat and other BN component party members.