

29 JUN 2003

Pandithan-BN

BN'S CONSENSUS SYSTEM OUTDATED, SAYS PANDITHAN

SEREMBAN, June 29 (Bernama) -- Indian Progressive Front (IPF) president Datuk M.G. Pandithan today reiterated his call to the Barisan Nasional (BN) leadership to review the consensus system to admit new members into the coalition.

He said it was time the BN revised the system as it was outdated.

Under the system, practised since BN's inception, a political party applying to join the BN must be supported by all the component parties to gain admission.

Pandithan said his party would not give up but instead would continue to pursue its struggle to be a BN component party.

"Although the IPF has not been admitted into the BN after trying in vain for almost 15 years, this has not weaken or waned our members' determination to join the coalition.

"We'll be patient but continue to pursue our struggle to be a BN component. We believe the day will come when we will be accepted as a BN component," he told reporters after Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad opened the state IPF delegates conference here today.

Pandithan hoped that IPF's application would be supported by all the 14 BN component parties, including the MIC.

"We're appealing to the BN to accept IPF as we have been giving undivided support to the BN and its candidates in all the general elections," he said.

Pandithan claimed that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi were sympathetic towards IPF members and have asked them not to despair but to continue with their struggle.

"In fact, other BN leaders also know that we work hard and was committed to the BN," he said.

He said IPF has close to 400,000 members nationwide.

Asked on IPF's preparations for the next general election, Pandithan said his party had activated the election machinery at all levels since early this year.

-- BERNAMA

APG TS