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Pandithan to lodge police report against Samy Vellu

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Indian Progressive Front president Datuk M.G. Pandithan said today he would lodge a police report against MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu for leaking a document classified under the Official Secrets Act 1972.

Pandithan said Samy Vellu, being the Works Minister who has served the Government for more than 20 years, ought to have known that he should not leak out secrets under the Act to the public.

"I am puzzled as to how Samy Vellu had obtained the document which was addressed to the then Prime Minister (Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad) and whether he (Samy Vellu) has any right to leak it," said Pandithan at a Press conference attended by some 200 IPF members.

On Sunday, Samy Vellu said Pandithan had made false claims that Malaysia Nanban editorial adviser Kumana Pupathi Athimulam or Athi Kumanan was the IPF deputy president, in the nomination form for a "Datukship" from the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

A day later, Pandithan admitted Athi Kumanan was not an IPF member, but maintained that there was nothing wrong in referring to him as the IPF deputy president.

Pandithan's statement came under fire from the Barisan Nasional component party and Opposition leaders who said it was unethical for him (Pandithan) to make false claims and that his act showed that Pandithan lacked credibility and could not be trusted as he had misled the people and the Government.

Asked when the police report will be lodged, Pandithan replied: "I will inform you as we need to sort out some things first. Samy Vellu also owes an apology to the King for dragging the Palace into this issue.

"I hope the police will act swiftly to prevent Samy Vellu from further abusing his position as this can lead to people questioning the integrity of the Cabinet and the Government".

On the issue of Athi Kumanan's membership in the IPF, Pandithan today made an about-turn to his earlier statements.

He said when the nomination was made, Athi Kumanan was already the IPF deputy president.

"Athi Kumanan accepted the post when I told him that the IPF central working committee had decided to appoint him as the deputy president.

"He told me not to reveal the matter as yet as he had some matters to settle and that he wanted to announce it himself. I agreed to it and that was why I remained silent all this while."

To a question on the exact date when Athi Kumanan was offered the post and when he agreed to accept it, Pandithan said: "It was done sometime back. The IPF deputy president post was left vacant for Athi Kumanan."

Meanwhile, Athi Kumanan who was present during the Press conference, said it was at his request that Pandithan remained silent on his (Athi Kumanan's) position as the IPF deputy president.

"I requested Pandithan not to tell anyone as I wanted to wait for the right time (to make it public). I feel today is the right moment for me to announce I am now the IPF deputy president.

"He (Pandithan) did not lie in referring to me as the IPF deputy president. Pandithan has contributed a lot for the Indians and it is sad that people are now questioning his loyalty and dignity."