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Step down, Pandithan urges Samy Vellu

Sajahan Waheed; Aniza Damis

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Indian Progressive Front president Datuk M.G.

Pandithan said today the Indian community needs a new leader who can unite them and bring more development.

He said Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu had been MIC president for a long time and he should therefore step down and let others lead the Indians.

He said it was baseless for Samy Vellu to claim that MIC members still needed his services and were not willing to let him go.

"He (Samy Vellu) should not find excuses not to step down after having served for more than 20 years. He has contributed his part to Indians and it is time to let someone else handle the responsibility and do his best for the community.

"No leader should feel that he is indispensable and that the country or community cannot survive without them," he said at the IPF Deepavali open house at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, near here.

He said Samy Vellu should look to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was willing to step down and hand over his post to his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi although many Malaysians still wanted him to continue leading the country.

"Previously, Samy Vellu had said that he would step down when Dr Mahathir did so. However, he is now giving excuses that his members are not willing to let him go."

He said Indians needed a leader to unite the community and bring more progress.

Asked whether the IPF would have a better chance of being admitted to Barisan Nasional if Samy Vellu was no longer MIC president, he replied: "Yes, I believe the new Indian leader (MIC president) will take efforts to unite the community. If MIC deputy president (Datuk S. Subramaniam) takes over, I am sure we can become friends and work together to better serve the community.

"There is no problem in having two Indian parties in BN like MCA and Gerakan. Dr Mahathir and Abdullah are sympathetic towards IPF but Samy Vellu is a stumbling block in our entry into BN. The Indian community is very divided."