

29/01/2003

MIC leaders blast Pandithan for asking Samy Vellu to resign post

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - MIC leaders today hit out at Indian Progressive Front president Datuk M.G. Pandithan for saying that it was time Datuk Seri Samy Vellu steps down as party president.

They told him to "mind his own business" given that his party was not even in the Barisan Nasional.

Pandithan said yesterday that it was time for Samy Vellu to hand over the party leadership to his deputy, Datuk S. Subramaniam.

He had said that the Indian community wanted a new leader in the Cabinet as Samy Vellu had stayed too long.

Pandithan made the statement in response to the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi should be given the opportunity to form his own line-up for the next general election.

MIC vice-president Datuk G. Palanivel said Pandithan's statement was uncalled for.

Palanivel said to stay in politics, the criterion was not age but whether one was still relevant.

"As far as the MIC is concerned, Samy Vellu is still very relevant to us and to the country," said Palanivel.

"Rather than putting his hand into other people's affairs, Pandithan should look into what he can contribute."

MIC youth chief S.A. Vigneswaran said Pandithan's rationale that Samy Vellu should step down because he has served too long was not acceptable as in some parties, there were members who had been Members of Parliament or state assemblymen for much longer than the party president.

"For the MIC, the present leadership line-up has proven itself and there is no reason why such a well-oiled machinery needs to be changed," he said.

"And even if there was a need for a change, the members can decide. We do not need an outsider, especially Pandithan, to tell us."

Wanita MIC chief Senator Jaya Partiban said it was obvious that Pandithan did not understand the BN principle.

MIC Bukit Bintang division chairman Datuk V.K.K. Teagarajan said Pandithan should stay out of MIC's affairs and mind his own "mosquito" party.