

# Friends forever – Pandithan and Sammy

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## Delegates burst into applause as they embrace

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Once good friends, they became bitter political rivals. Yesterday, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Sammy Vellu and IPF president Tan Sri M.G. Pandithan announced their undying relationship in front of 3,000 IPF delegates.

»This friendship is permanent and there is no departure. I will only depart at my death«

TAN SRI M.G. PANDITHAN

They hugged with tears in their eyes. The delegates burst into applause.

"Once we were friends, then we separated and now we have rejoined. This friendship is permanent and there is no departure. I will only depart at my death," said Pandithan.

He said the MIC supremo was the "true leader of the Indian community" and bestowed the *Wira Kaum India* title on Sammy Vellu at IPF's 15th general assembly.

Sammy Vellu turned poetic when describing



**Strong bond:** Pandithan welcoming Sammy Vellu to the 15th IPF general assembly in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

the respect Pandithan enjoyed among his followers.

Pandithan, who once regarded Sammy Vellu as his mentor, was an MIC vice-president, Tapah MP and parliamentary secretary to the Trade and Industry Ministry in June 1988.

He was sacked after he started a fast-to-death effort in a bid to get charges of inciting violence and unrest within the party dropped. He also brought a coffin to the MIC headquarters in protest.

After expulsion from MIC on July 16, 1988, Pandithan tried to return to the party but was unsuccessful and in August 1990, he formed IPF.

His several attempts to join Barisan were thwarted by Sammy Vellu and his scathing attacks on the MIC president failed to make headway.

However, when Pandithan fell ill and was hospitalised last year, Sammy Vellu visited him and the two fell into an emotional reunion.