

# President: IPF won't be dissolved as long as I'm alive

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Indian Progressive Front (IPF) would not be dissolved as long as "I am alive," said its president Tan Sri M.G. Pandithan.

"Even to the last drop of my blood, I want to remain in IPF. We have gone through 20 years of hardship and struggle and I want the party to remain," he said.

In his address at the party's 15th general assembly, Pandithan said that despite IPF's new cooperation with MIC, the struggle to be admitted into Barisan Nasional would continue.

For the first time in IPF's history, one-time political foe MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy

Vellu was given the honour of addressing the 3,000 delegates yesterday.

Acting Gerakan president Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon, MIC deputy president Datuk G. Palanivel, and MIC vice-presidents Datuk S. Veerasingam and Tan Sri K.S. Nijhar were also present.

Samy Vellu said that the question of IPF's entry into Barisan was not discussed but MIC held fast to the belief that only one Indian-based party could represent the community in Barisan.

The frail Pandithan, 67, who was once an ardent critic of Samy Vellu, yesterday heaped praise and welcome on the MIC president.

"His (Samy Vellu's) presence has brought a glow to IPF and this day will be long remembered as a momentous day in the chequered history of IPF," he said.

However, his recent rediscovered affection for Samy Vellu has not gone down well with many in his own party. An anti-Samy Vellu vernacular newspaper had gone to town recently slamming Pandithan for selling out IPF and predicting that it would be dissolved.

Pandithan took issue with the newspaper yesterday, saying that IPF dissidents had used the paper to vent their frustration.

"I said I would make an important

announcement on the future of the party at today's assembly but the newspaper gave space to members who claimed to have positions in IPF," he said.

Earlier in his speech, Samy Vellu said MIC and IPF could work together to resolve the problems faced by the community especially on housing, employment opportunities and business. He also pledged RM500,000 for the IPF building fund.

Speaking to reporters later, Pandithan said he was grateful to Samy Vellu who had agreed to MIC working with IPF without setting any conditions.