

New Indian party joins BN

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PETALING JAYA: The newly formed Malaysian Indian Association (MIA) has been accepted as a member of the Barisan Nasional coalition, according to one of its leaders.

MIA secretary MN Mathew told FMT today that the party would formally announce its entry into BN at a press conference tomorrow.

He said one of the party's most urgent tasks was to increase its membership, especially in the Federal Territory.

Matthew claimed to have been informed that BN had also accepted Parti Punjabi Malaysia into its fold, but FMT was unable to contact any official of the party to confirm this.

This development in BN politics is expected to cause disquiet among several other Indian-based parties that have been trying for some time to join the coalition.

Since the 1990s, the Indian Progressive Front (IPF) have applied several times to become a BN member but have been unsuccessful due to strong opposition from former MIC president S Samy Vellu.

Other parties that have been hoping for BN membership are Makkal Sakthi Party, Malaysian Indian Justice Party and Malaysian Indian United Party.

Under BN rules, a political organisation can join the coalition only if all current component parties accept it. Expelling a component party requires a majority vote.

An MIC official who requested anonymity told FMT that MIA's acceptance into BN was a "direct slap" on the face of his party's president, G Palanivel.

"As we all know, MIC has been the only Indian party in the government since Independence," he said. "But now we may have to share our vehicle with others.

"The first thing we want to know is how in the world did MIA and Parti Punjabi manage to gain entry into BN without Palanivel's consent?"

At MIC's annual general meeting in 2011, Palanivel said the party would leave BN if it accepted any other Indian party.

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