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Sabah BN component member Akar to disband

Joniston Bangkuai

KOTA KINABALU, Sat. - Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat Bersatu, one of the oldest component members of the Sabah Barisan Nasional, is disbanding 12 years after it was formed.

The decision on dissolution was made at the party's closed-door emergency meeting chaired by president Senator Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia at Tang's Hotel today. This brings to an end months of speculation over Akar's future after Pandikar hinted at the delegates' meeting late last year that the party would be dissolved.

Today's emergency meeting was called as a prelude to the party's special gathering here tomorrow which will be opened by Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Several supreme council members said the dissolution would be officially announced at the gathering.

Asked about it at the Kota Kinabalu international airport, Pandikar said: "You wait until tomorrow."

Today's emergency meeting decided that its members should join other BN component parties in the State, particularly Umno, United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Organisation (Upko) and MCA.

An Akar supreme council member said Pandikar, who is Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, would be joining Umno together with most of the party's supreme council members.

"Pandikar will be submitting his application form to Dr Mahathir at the special gathering tomorrow," said the Akar supreme council member who declined to be named.

Formed in September 1989 by several Parti Bersatu Sabah dissidents, Akar has between 25,000 and 30,000 members.

It does not have an elected representative in either the State Legislative Assembly or Parliament.

With the dissolution of Akar, the State BN will be left with eight component members - Umno, Upko, Sabah Progressive Party, Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah, Liberal Democratic Party, MCA, Gerakan and MIC.