

Anwar yet to decide on meeting with Hindraf
MalaysiaKini.com
April 06, 2012
By Nigel Aw

PKR supremo Anwar Ibrahim has yet to decide on Hindraf's invitation for Pakatan Rakyat to explain its 100-day plan to uplift the Indian poor community if it comes into power in the next general election.

"I will discuss it with the party," he told journalists after a dialogue with Indonesian and Malaysian students at the Selangor state secretariat building in Shah Alam today.

Hindraf de facto leader P Uthayakumar had on Wednesday extended the invitation to Anwar, DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang and PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang for the opposition coalition to outline its policies.

This, and Pakatan's willingness to endorse Hindraf's 18-point demands, Uthayakumar had said, will decide if the movement endorses Pakatan Rakyat.

He had said that the outcome of the meeting would also decide if Hindraf will back the mooted Bersih 3.0 rally on April 28.

The public meeting is scheduled to be held in Klang on April 22.

Uthayakumar had said that if Pakatan Rakyat refuses to engage Hindraf, the movement will have "no alternative" but to contest in the general election on their own, potentially becoming spoilers in marginal seats.

Ex-minister: Protests are part of democracy

Earlier, Anwar had welcomed former Indonesian minister Adi Sasono with other Indonesian politicians in a dialogue on Asean.

NONESharing about the country's development after the reformasi movement, Adi (left) noted that Indonesia has seen a rise in protests.

"But protests are part of democracy and the duty of the police is to facilitate, not confront them," he said.

The political scene has also become more crowded, but these varied opinions ensure there is no monopoly on the media, he added.

However, Indonesia's Welfare Justice Party (PKS) secretary-general Fahri Hamzah, who was also present, advised Malaysia to conduct its reforms in an orderly fashion.

"We introduced 300 new reform laws in less than two years (after the reformasi movement), the transition was on the right track but after President BJ Habibie the leaders did not have a road map and Indonesia's reform went in circles," he said.

Indonesia's change, he added, had a tendency of going for revolution which led to the changes to come "too soon and too much" without a proper direction.

'Even Najib shares our heritage'

Commenting on the precarious relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia, Fahri acknowledged that several issues affecting both countries had been blown out of proportion.

“Many Indonesians criticise Malaysia for stealing their culture such as the batik, songs or dances.

NONE“But Malaysians call themselves Malays, in Javanese language Malay means ‘orang pergi’ (travellers), Malaysians have their origin in Indonesia, for example (Prime Minister) Najib Abdul Razak is of Bugis descent,” he said.

This, Fahri (right) added, meant that both Indonesia and Malaysia share a common heritage which neither can claim exclusive right.

He said that to avoid further conflict, both countries must appreciate their common ancestry which would also serve in the larger context of Asean integration.

In recent years, Indonesia has accused Malaysia of stealing its cultural heritage including the Balinese Pendet dance and the Rasa Sayang song, on top of border skirmishes over oil-rich regions bordering the two nations.

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