

BN MPs invite Anwar to launch of Sabah Reform Front
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By Hazlan Zakaria

Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim has been invited to attend the launch of the Sabah Reform Front in the east Malaysian state this weekend by two serving BN parliamentarians Lajim Ukin (Beaufort) and Wilfred Bumburing (Tuaran).

Sabah PKR liaison chief Ahmad Tamrin Jaini, when contacted by Malaysiakini today, confirmed that Anwar would be in Sabah this weekend on its invitation.

"He has been given the honour of being at the launch of the Sabah Reform Front," Ahmad Tamrin said, relating that Anwar was invited by the MPs to two events, one in Tuaran and the other in Beaufort.

He said these are not PKR events but functions organised by Umno's Lajim and Upko's Bumburing .

Ahmad Tamrin explained that he was not able to comment on this before as it was just speculation. However, he received the formal invitations from both MPs today.

"This is a great development for PKR. It shows the two MPs may be willing to leave BN and work together with Pakatan to overthrow BN in Sabah," Ahmad Tamrin speculated.

Asked if the BN parliamentarians would announce their move to leave BN or join Pakatan during the events, the Sabah PKR liaison chief said, "You will have to wait and see."

However, Lakim Ujin when contacted would only say, "It is not confirmed yet", before the call was cut off. Further efforts to contact him until press time have been unsuccessful.

'Disillusioned with the BN'

Speculation has been raging that Bumburing and Lajim have become disillusioned with the BN and may jump ship to throw their support behind the opposition.

Lajim has resigned as Kerambai Kebatu Umno chief and did not defend his post as chairperson of the Beaufort Umno division.

Further fuelling speculation of his intention to leave Umno was his meeting with PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat in Kota Baru earlier this week.

Bumburing, who is from United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko), resigned as Tuaran BN chairperson days ago and is a member of the political grouping Amanah, which comprises disgruntled current and former BN leaders.

He has said he would be making an important announcement that will impact his political future at an event in Tuaran this weekend.

These developments tally with the analysis by Sabah UiTM political scientist Arnold Puyok, who said at a recent forum on Sabah and Sarawak politics that Pakatan, having been unsuccessful in trying to work with the Sabah faction led by Jeffrey Kitingan, needed another group to assist it on the ground in the Land Below The Wind.

Puyok said the earlier alliance failed because Jeffrey saw Pakatan as unable or unwilling to help him pursue his Borneo agenda, while Anwar considered Jeffrey a dangerous man because if the alliance wins, Pakatan would have to help Jeffrey with his regional agenda.

The analyst predicts that the general election in Sabah will see three-way contests among BN, Jeffrey's United Borneo Front and Pakatan, which will be supported by the new SRF that likely to be led by Bumburing.

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