

KJ vs Ibrahim Ali: It's ON!
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The fourth Malaysia Student Leaders Conference this weekend may feature a stellar cast of Malaysian personalities but all eyes will be on two MPs - Khairy Jamaluddin and Ibrahim Ali.

The duo, along with Shah Alam MP Khalid Samad, are scheduled to share the same stage to talk about their pet topics - politics and race - at the conference session entitled 'The Malaysian political mindset: Will politics of ideology trump that of race?'

khairy jamaluddin umno youth chief 250309As of yesterday evening, Khairy (right) appeared to be still mulling over his participation judging from his posts on Twitter.

After a three-post preamble on ministers and their deputies shunning forums with students and opposition leaders, and complaining about getting "third-hand invites", Khairy asked his 10,301 Twitter followers if he should show up.

"What I'm getting at is this Sunday, I've been invited to square off with... Ibrahim Ali. Should I go?" he wrote.

Late this evening, Khairy confirmed that he would be attending the forum.

"Yup, I'm going. I had to rearrange functions in Rembau (hence) the late confirmation," said Khairy, in a text message reply to Malaysiakini.

Khairy has also broadcast the confirmation on Twitter, after many of his followers asked him about the matter.

"What do you think? I am Ketua Pemuda," he wrote.

Bad blood between the two

Given the nature of the topic, and their past histories, the forum promises to be a colourful affair between the self-proclaimed reformist Khairy and blunt spoken conservative Ibrahim, who have crossed swords numerous times in recent weeks.

The trouble began when Khairy came to the rescue of MCA Youth chief Wee Ka Siong, who was under fire from Malay rights pressure group Perkasa, which Ibrahim leads.

In urging the government to maintain the number of public service department scholarships, where a limited number are open to non-bumiputeras, Wee said that bumiputera students would feel slighted as well should Mara scholarships be reduced.

NONEFollowing this, Ibrahim (left) urged Khairy not to be a "traitor" to his own race and the war-of-words escalated to a bout of name calling.

Khairy called Ibrahim a jaguh kampung (village hero) and gedebe oportunis (opportunistic thug)

Ibrahim then retorted by calling Khairy a poor leader whose leadership had weakened Umno Youth, ignoring the needs of the Malay grassroots, leaving a void that is currently being filled by Perkasa.

Malaysiakini EIC to speak

Khairy, Ibrahim and Khalid are among a long list of personalities who will be speaking at the annual conference, to be officiated by Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin and Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein would be addressing the estimated 600 conference participants on July 31 and Aug 1 respectively.

The conference aims to expose student leaders to key national figures in order to provide a better understanding of issues faced by Malaysia.

Other topics to be discussed include local government elections, business in Asean countries, the 10th Malaysia Plan and the New Economic Model.

Malaysiakini editor-in-chief Steven Gan is among those scheduled to speak at the session entitled "The responsibility of the media towards nation building: The tri-lemma of quality, ethics and independence".

Other speakers for this session include Malay Mail editor AHIRUDIN ATTAN, NSTP group managing editor Ariffin Mohammed Isa and Malaysian Insider editor Jahabar Sadiq.

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