

PKR leader poaching whole parties, not just MPs
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While all eyes are on possible defections by disgruntled MPs from Barisan Nasional, PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim is believed to be quietly enticing its component parties to pull out from the ruling coalition.

According to a source close to PKR Sabah, a number of state Barisan component parties are waiting for the opportune moment to join forces with the Pakatan Rakyat coalition which Anwar leads.

"The component parties are ready, but there need to be more discussions with (Sabah) Umno MPs (with Anwar)," said the source.

2008 election results for sabah and sarawak 120508The Sabah parties which may pull out from Barisan are likely to be Kadazandusun and Chinese-based parties.

Apart from rebel Barisan party Sabah Progressive Party (Sapp), the other parties likely to be on the 'defection list' are United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko), Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS). Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS) and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

A similar scenario appear unfolding in Sarawak involving Iban and Dayak-based parties - Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) and Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP).

PKR information chief Tian Chua said that the party prefers one-to-one talks to persuade individual MPs to their side but would still welcome Barisan component parties as Pakatan partners.

"We prefer talks on an individual basis so they can join PKR. But we also appreciate it should some parties want to keep to their (own) identities, yet form pacts with Pakatan," he said.

Prepare for upcoming 'surprise'

Chua said it was a "forgone conclusion" that the Sept 16 deadline would be met and that present discussions with Barisan MPs were on the finer details of forming the new federal government.

"People are ready for change and an agreement (to form the next federal government) should be ironed out over the next few days," he said.

Following the March 8 general elections, Anwar had repeatedly trumpeted that he would engineer defections culminating in the fall of the Barisan federal government on Sept 16 - the 45th anniversary of Sabah and Sarawak joining Malaya to form the federation of Malaysia.

Since returning to Parliament last Thursday, Anwar has announced that he has met an unconfirmed number of Barisan MPs from Sarawak and Sabah to discuss defection plans.

Meanwhile, a Peninsula-based PKR official told Malaysiakini that the party top leadership has informed second-tier leaders to brief grassroots of an impending "surprise".

These leaders were to brief party rank-and-file of the possible toppling of the Barisan federal government and the potential entry of new parties into Pakatan.

"Even with the coming changes, we don't want to sideline the grassroots. They are our support base. Furthermore, it is imperative that proper information be passed on to them," said the official.

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