

Anwar's aide says no invite yet to launch new Sabah party
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KUALA LUMPUR, July 27 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has yet to receive an invite to launch a new Kadazandusun party in Tuaran this Sunday by two Sabah lawmakers days after they quit their Barisan Nasional (BN) posts.

The opposition leader's chief of staff, Ibrahim Yaakob, denied knowledge of the event.

"I've not received any invite thus far, so I don't know anything," he said when contacted by The Malaysian Insider earlier this evening.

Anwar is currently in Medina and is scheduled to fly home tomorrow. He could not be immediately reached for comment. Sources in PKR have said he is expected to attend a function in Sabah over the weekend.

Sabah PKR chief Ahmad Tamrin Jaini was reported earlier today as saying he had received a formal invitation for Anwar to attend the launch of the Sabah Reform Front (SRF), a new political movement set up by Sabah's Kadazandusun community.

Speculation has it that the party will ally with the opposition Pakatan Rakyat (PR) pact ahead of key national polls due within the next nine months.

"He has been given the honour of being at the launch of the Sabah Reform Front," Ahmad Tamrin was quoted as telling news portal Malaysiakini earlier today.

The news portal reported Ahmad Tamrin as saying Beaufort MP Datuk Seri Lajim Ukin and Tuaran MP Datuk Seri Wilfred Mojilip Bumburing were the organisers of the two functions who had sent a formal invitation to Anwar. Lajim was also reported as saying Anwar had yet to confirm his attendance.

The Malaysian Insider was unable to contact any one of the trio for further details.

Lajim quit his post as Kerambai Kebatu Umno branch chief last month but maintained he was not leaving the party to join the opposition, while Bumburing, who is also deputy president of the United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (UPKO), quit his BN division chief post last week and has been coy about his chances of crossing over to PKR.

Should Anwar attend the launch as rumoured, it will be the clearest signal to date of shifting allegiances in the ruling BN coalition's eastern stronghold.

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