

Najib to announce Sabah RCI terms next Saturday
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 3 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak will reveal details of the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) into Sabah's illegal immigrant problem next Saturday, finally putting an end to nearly six months of uncertainty on the issue.

The prime minister confirmed today that the terms of reference for the royal panel's probe will be disclosed following his meeting with Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders.

"I will announce on the 11th (of August)," he told reporters today when asked for a date.

"I have met with a few Sabah BN leaders and I will meet with them on the 11th," he said.

The prime minister's visit to the east Malaysian state may coincide with Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's, who is scheduled to be in Sabah the following day.

Najib had announced the highly-anticipated RCI on Sabah's illegals issue on June 1 but stopped short of revealing details of the panel's composition and terms of reference.

The issue has been bandied about in the media since February 10 when Sabah BN leader Tan Sri Bernard Dompok's first announced Cabinet's decision to form the RCI.

The unchecked influx of illegal immigrants in Sabah has been a longstanding problem in the BN-ruled state, and frequently blamed for the rise in social, economic and security problems suffered by the locals here.

According to replies provided in Parliament last year, Sabah's populace numbered 651,304 in 1970 and grew to 929,299 a decade later. But in the two decades following 1980, the state's population rose significantly by a staggering 1.5 million people, reaching 2,468,246 by 2000.

Media reports said that as of 2010, this number has grown further to 3.12 million, with foreigners making up a sizeable 27 per cent or 889,799 of the population.

Opposition leaders have long raged against the BN government for this population explosion, alleging that illegals have been allowed into the east Malaysian state, and given MyKads and voting rights to help the ruling coalition cling to power.

The issue has also been among the key reasons behind the latest departures of two senior BN lawmakers — Tuaran MP Datuk Seri Wilfred Mojilip Bumburing and Beaufort MP Datuk Seri Lajim Ukin.

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