

'Warisan is hottest new party in Sabah'

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By Zam Yusa

Youth chief Aziz Jamman believes Sabahans will give the party the mandate come election time, with membership numbers expected to breach 100,000 soon.

KOTA KINABALU: Parti Warisan Sabah (Warisan) Youth chief Aziz Jamman said the party is the "hottest" new party in the state with members now numbering almost 100,000 as of last month.

Less than a year old, the fledgling party led by former federal minister Shafie Apdal has taken wing and is now soaring with its moves to recruit members, including organising roadshows across Sabah.

"We have distributed 500,000 membership application forms and as of the middle of May, our party membership is close to 100,000. So there are around 400,000 more forms to be returned," Aziz told FMT.

Shafie was sacked from the cabinet in July 2015 and quit Umno in July 2016, before announcing that he would helm a new party in Sabah.

The Semporna MP declined to join PPBM, the federal-based party formed by sacked deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin and former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, saying he preferred a Sabah-centric platform.

Warisan was unveiled last October, with a name change after Shafie took over an existing party and recruited several leaders from other opposition parties, including Darell Leiking of PKR and Junz Wong of DAP.

The four-party opposition coalition Gabungan Sabah (United Sabah Alliance) recently said it was unfazed by Warisan's heavy recruitment but opened its arms for the lone opposition party to come into its fold to consolidate the opposition's strength to topple ruling coalition Barisan Nasional (BN) in the upcoming election.

Meanwhile, Aziz said the membership count should already be much higher but thousands have not submitted their forms as they want to express their support directly to Shafie when he makes his trips around the state.

“We know that the people have filled up the forms, but they haven’t submitted them because they want to do so when party president Shafie Apdal comes over to their place.

“We have scheduled Shafie to visit Tuaran, Sepanggar, Sipitang and more districts in the near future and we believe we’ll increase the tally of our membership then. Our party is the hottest new party in Sabah and we are confident Sabahans will give us the mandate come election time.

“We’d like to reiterate that we’ll never join any opposition coalition because we believe they’re friendly with the BN. They say they are against the BN when they’re out campaigning but that’s only their words – their actions are sending out an opposite signal to us,” Aziz said.

‘Double-Six’ official report

Asked about the recent commemoration of the 41st anniversary of the plane crash which took the lives of 11 people, including Sabah’s first chief minister Fuad Stephens, Aziz agreed that the full official report of the 1976 incident should be declassified and released.

Stephens, along with state cabinet members Peter Mojuntin, Salleh Sulong, Chong Thien Vun and several other top government officials, were flying from Labuan back to Kota Kinabalu when their plane crashed into waters off Sembulan.

After the investigations, it was announced that the crash, called “Double Six” because it happened on June 6, was due to “human error” but the full findings were classified under the Official Secrets Act.

There are mixed feelings among the families of the crash victims over the release of the report.

During a state legislative assembly session in April, chief minister Musa Aman responded to an opposition question by saying that the report was still classified and that the “Sabah civil aviation department has no new information on the crash”.

This week, DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang pledged to declassify and release the full investigation findings if the opposition party’s coalition, Pakatan Harapan, comes into power at the state and federal levels.

“I agree that the full findings of Double-Six should be made public because everyone – family, current and future leaders as well as the general public – deserve to know,” said Aziz.

“This is my personal opinion but I believe the party shares it. I hope the current government heeds this clarion call this time.”

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