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Call for removal of Arthur could backfire, analyst warns

Daily Express (KK), Malaysia



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PETALING JAYA: An analyst has warned that the call by an Umno division leader for Arthur Joseph Kurup to be removed as Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman for allegedly failing to help the coalition campaign in two state elections could backfire.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah's Syahrudin Awang Ahmad said such a demand would only reinforce the perception that Umno



wants control of BN.

"It also feeds into the notion that Umno is reluctant to share power with Sabah-based components.

"Such an impression would erode the trust among locals who are pushing for Sabah-centric agendas to be prioritised," he told FMT.

On Monday, Tawau Umno chief Ghazalie Ansing called for Kurup, the Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS) president, to be replaced as Sabah BN chairman, citing his absence in the run-up to the Johor and

Negeri Sembilan polls.

Kurup was appointed Sabah BN chairman – a post traditionally held by Sabah Umno chiefs – in January this year.

Syahrudin said Ghazalie's call for Kurup to be dropped was also unreasonable given the differing political landscapes in Sabah and Peninsular Malaysia.

He said that as a Sabah-based party, PBRS had more influence in certain parts of the state, while Umno had a wider grassroots network in West Malaysia.

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Call to replace Arthur ‘immature’

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Kurup’s appointment was also a strategic move by BN in view of Sabahans’ demand to be led by locally based parties, Syahrudin said.

Arvin Tajari of Universiti Teknologi Mara described Ghazalie’s call for Kurup to be replaced as “immature”, saying the former had disregarded PBRS’s role as a bridge for BN to connect with Sabahan voters.

He said that while Umno was the largest BN component, the party must acknowledge its dismal performance in the last Sabah polls in 2025 where it secured only five of the 41 seats it contested.

“PBRS is the local party in BN (in Sabah),” he said when contacted, adding that Umno could no longer act as though it was a dominant force.

The political landscape in Sabah changed following the emergence of Warisan and Gabungan Rakyat Sabah, he said, adding that these political outfits were becoming more popular among locals.

He said Umno should come to terms with the fact that a Sabah-based party could help revive support for it.

“Umno and BN need to come back down to earth. PBRS can be placed front and centre to help woo voters back to the coalition.”



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SUMMARIES

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