

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

This morning on the Breakfast Grille, we welcome Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, the founder of the Pakatan Harapan aligned Parti Warisan Sabah and also, being the Chief Minister of the state. Datuk Seri, thank you for talking to us. Let's begin with the dissolution of the State Assembly. If you can explain why he did so because it was reported that there were at least three coup attempts, external threats, two of which you thwarted. And now there's this lawsuit. Do clarify please.

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

All right, a very good morning to you all and I really appreciate the invitation for me to appear on your radio. The questions about how it did come about to this dissolution for State Assembly in Sabah. But of course, I think it's now public knowledge that everybody knows, even when I debated in Parliament, you know, we are facing COVID-19. But I did also mention about COVID politics in Sabah, and not only in Sabah, but also in many other states too. What happened in Kedah, what happened in Malacca, and they try to do that also in Sabah.

So, I knew about what the movement of these people were trying to, using all sorts of instrument. Be it income tax, be it the police, you know, I've seen that. Then we have – we saw that with our own eyes and I think this is quite crucial for us to remind, not only ourselves but also Malaysians at large. The system is very democratic, and the system is quite, you know, where the suppression of power. It's quite clear where the rulers had their own, including the Governor of Sabah and also the executive where the cabinets and also the Court.

But unfortunately, through all the use of various instruments (of) intimidations, they tried that for almost three months. But I have been reading it. I've been trailing it, and I knew about how even announcement were made, you know, they had numbers that have - even during their Raya do, they said, you know, they have the numbers, but I knew that they didn't have the number because when they mentioned they have the number, I have the signatures of 45 ADUNs, State assembly men in front of me. They signed it. They said that their pledge is to me and the government of the day so it didn't materialized for the first month and they keep on claiming and proprot to say that they had the number. But in spite of that, they tried their very best. They even, uh, all sort of intimidations and harassments were done.

Some of our YBs, even the YBs, some of them call me up. They move from one house to another house, avoiding people's intimidations. Even some of them did a police report. I mean, one of them is YB Jenifer Lasimbang of Penampang when they went to her house, without even a proper warrant as to why they were there. But they were just merely pressuring her (to) join, you know, money will be around. There will be positions to be given, all sorts of things.

So, realizing that so with all intimidations, when I spoke to some of them, uh, I don't think it's right, you know, as an individual like me, you know. When I, of course, I wouldn't like to dissolve the Assembly because, uh, we're facing a lot of problem in the country not only facing the economic

crisis, that we have COVID is also right in front of us, surrounding us.

But when I look at it, you know, the way they do things, they did it in such a manner. It is better for me to hand over, let the people decide. Not for the system- all this intimidations and inducement, promising you'll be the Minister, you will be the assistant Minister. We will give you that amount of money. Of course, it's not easy to prove that. But out of those sort of things, even our YBs, the current ones that have been asked, you know, they said that, you know, they spoke about the numbers, did the police report. I mean, I just wonder, why didn't they investigate it? Why didn't they ask? Instead, they asked our people. There were questions in the police stations. Why didn't they question, who is behind this? I mean, don't tell me Tom, Dick and Harry is wandering around Kota Kinabalu, going into people's house. They're not even a very prominent people. They're not even, uh YBs. But who did direct these people to go and reach these people and try to induce them. Try to influence them. Who are they? Are they want...are they a YB who want to become the Chief minister or do you want to form the government?

They don't have the means. Surely there will be some people behind it, you know, trying to induce these people, you know, to convince these people. But I know about the system. It has been...it is happened many times in Sabah. So I thought that, you know, it's timely for me to seek the, you know, sort of like a, you know sort of like the, that power is vested with the governor then, of course, being the Chief Minister of the day, I have the right to, as the Chief Minister, uh, to give advice, is just like you know what happened in K.L. when Mahathir said, you know well, I'm going to tender my resignation and the King said don't resign. So, he will check who and who and of course, Mahathir claim he got 214. But the king said well appoint already Myudin (Muhyiddin)...so he has the executive power. He has the constitutional right as the King similarly with the government of the day. I mean uh, he has that constitutional right to dissolve or not to dissolve, not based only from advice from the Prime Minister or Chief Minister. End of the day it is the Governor's right under the constitution. It's not my right...to dissolve the Assembly.

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

Correct. So, at the period concerned, there was two ruling chief ministers and there was only the second time this history since the dispute between PBS and USNO in the 1980s, it really was a constitutional crisis. Now, in the next elections, how do you ensure that this doesn't happen again? Specifically, with regard to the, to the allegiances or the lack of allegiance off ah, off each member to the party? How do you ensure loyalty in other words?

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

Well, you have seen that out of those, uh, YBs that have moved, shifted to the other side, none of my YBs, Warisan, not a single one of them, you know? I'm so...it touches me actually, you know,

when I realised that none off my YBs from Warisan, in spite of the temptations, intimidations and also inducement, that has been, you know, ah... received by them, move out. Yeah? Of course, with exceptions off two YBs from PKR and one YB from DAP – and uh, if these three guys didn't do anything, well, it's impossible for Musa to claim. So, what is important, I think with the background of these guys in the future, with this, uh, during this elections, are they really with us or are they, for there, for just become YBs, or you know, there will be some kind of move - I'm sure, I think, they will also try their level best right after the elections to buy people, too. Because I think that is why, I think in the future, we will do some kind of change, amendment on the enactment on how we can refrain them from moving out. From uh...from the ruling government.

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

There's also some question marks about the viability of holding an election in this time. I think a quarter of Sabahans are in Peninsula Malaysia. So, you've got talks ongoing with EC, the Election Commission to allow for postal voting? What's your sense of that particular development?

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

Well, uh, they will be coming back, through my experience, for this is my 6th term, 5th term, so I'm quite sure I think, we didn't have any postal vote then. I mean, there's no such thing. That's just because some of the Sabahan, not even a quarter of them. I'm quite sure they have been back in and out...ah, I was then Vice President of UMNO, when we chartered a flight about seven, flight 737, we brought back all the voters coming, residing, working in KL, coming back to [inaudible] but there was no questions of postal voters anyway. I mean, one can imagine some of them is really back here in Sabah anyway, because of COVID and some unemployment. You know, some of the companies have been closing down, and I'm quite sure because some of them communicated with me and some of them did ask for a ticket to come back. I said, why do you want to come back? I mean, no, we have no job here, so we have been, how many months here? Three months, please Datuk Seri, help us to come back. They're here, some of them, yeah.

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

So, what happens then, when the election period begins. What will your Warisan's manifesto be? What will your key priorities be?

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

We don't have any new manifesto, but we have already a new deal under the new environment which I will dispel out. I think we just need to be little bit improvise on what we have already spell out the new deal for Sabah under the current environment, because being a trading country, Malaysia, so we have to be mindful, not many other countries can receive the goods that we export. At the same time it's not easy to handle that. So I think they're certain sectors that I already spelt out where we need to focus, where Sabah has the advantage as compared to other states within. The first priority that we [inaudible] is to enhance our domestic economy, the domestic consumptions and domestic tourism, which I think is being bearing fruits now in Sabah towards the weekend. You know, places like Sutra Harbour occupancy is about 70% but they're Sabahan. They are Malaysian, you know, domestic tourism. I'm not relying on foreign tourists for the time being, you know. But I have really indicated to my Minister of Tourism that, look into, in the future, when there's a vaccine where we can control and where there are places, countries that with green kinda zone. No incidents of COVID that we can work with them and they can come over here. But we're still looking at it, whether it's ah, where and when is the time frame that we can allow those people to come over to Sabah. So, this is the some of the sectors we're looking at, but it's under the new deal. I will spell it out (when) the time comes.

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

We're talking this morning to Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, Founder of the PH Alliance Parti Warisan Sabah and also the Chief Minister of Sabah. We'll come back after this Datuk, and we'll discuss the efforts to reinvigorate the domestic economy as well as your other election pillars. BFM 89.9.

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Khoo Hsu Chuang:

This morning on The Breakfast Grille, we have with us Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, founder of Parti Warisan Sabah, and also the Chief Minister of the state. Now, when we look at some of the fundamental issues facing Sabah, obviously it's the economy. It's the post COVID recovery. You mentioned a new deal. What are some of the specifics you can talk about within them, in terms of a sneak peek of this new deal?

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

Well, the new deal that we, I spell out the couple of months ago was based on the current environment the world is facing, the country is facing. So being a trading nations, Malaysia, and Sabah has been nicely located, nearby to countries like Brunei, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, China. So, one can imagine that this country, for example, like Singapore, they're in needs of some of the food items. You don't have an ample land, (where) they can grow veggie or whatever it is that it's required for, you know, feeding the people. So is Brunei, so looking at that sort of environment. So we focus into how best we can establish and ensure that Sabah will have food security. Have ample supply food hub, be it in terms of providing fresh fish, lobsters; we are known for that, and also veggies as well, vegetable. So fruits as well. We have a good, a good number of places in Sabah we can, where we can, we're growing like pomelo, pineapples, you know, these are the sort of things that we're looking when we talk about security. Of course, the other area that we have, to enhance our capacity, tourism for example. Like all the while we have been relying, one of our backbone economic growth revenue comes from tourism, because we have been the biggest recipient of tourists coming from China. Sabah is one nothing compared to other Malaysia, so we're looking into that sort of thing. And of course, downstream, industrialisation. I think, uh, since Sabah is one of the biggest producer of palm oil in Malaysia, So we have the potentials of not only trying to export our CPO (crude palm oil), but also the need for us to go downstream. That's why, ah, recently I have already launched, for example, the production, the industry of having, ah, cooking oil and other industry related to the product itself. So, I think this is some of the area that we're looking to and so is similarly also with rubber. I think next week, I'm going to launch an industry glove, you know, glove the rubber gloves. So, this is some of the area that we're looking to. Of course, the timber is another sector that we need to enhance because we have.. resources is abundant, that uh, no one can dispute that. Of course, it will take a little time because going downstream like, doing furniture, of course, we need to have not only in terms of capacity, in terms of finance, but also the manpower and the skill for us to realise that? But I spoke, I discussed, with some of those IKEA, for example, like, [inaudible] notable kind off, uh, flat form in the world. So I did, I did try to ask them to come over to Sabah to venture, to even.. I met the Japanese, the Premier. So I went to Japan last year, so I try to, I tried my level best to call him up and they were there on the pipeline to have a joint venture with Sabah business community here to set up an industry on furniture because they do import a lot of timber coming from Sabah. So these are some of the area that we're looking and and, the other sectors that Sabah is the biggest of all in the country, I was made to understand, 37% of the reserve oil in Malaysia is in Sabah. It comes from Sabah it's about one point, if I'm not mistaken, 1.5 billion barrels reserve that we have here. So, one can imagine if we were to tap these potentials in terms of getting revenue and jobs opportunity for Sabah, so these are the new deals that we need to realise. Of course it will take a longer time. It cannot be just fell out overnight that you realise that. No, it will take years and also getting all the expertise and the financing part of it. So, these are some of the area.

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

Okay...

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

...that we are looking to, how best, the new deal for Sabah. Of course, human capital is one, and that's why I've set up Ministry of Education and training and [inaudible], for us to expose, not only younger people, but TVET to be set up training center to make sure that we have the right [inaudible] for those industries that we are going to [inaudible].. new minister of education. And since we took over, it has already provided [inaudible] for the civil servant. Last year, when I sent some of the civil servants to London, to UK, to Cambridge University to expose them with certain skill and then supposed to be this year going to Canada because they have this knowledge about federal and state relationship, because you need to beef it up, to make sure that civil servant building a nation here, we are not only building a state. So how best we can realise a good relationship between federal and the state government. These are some of the areas that we're looking to, human capital development. Of course, we have the edge in terms of oil and gas. We have the advantage in terms of size of land compared to other state, or other region, compared to Singapore, compared to Peninsula, we have abundant of land, very fertile. It's volcanic soil, it's not peat soil that, you need to be treated, but these are the some advantage but we have planted.

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

We're talking this morning to Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, Founder of Parti Warisan Sabah and Chief Minister also of Sabah. Now, there are remaining several issues under the MA63, the Malaysia agreements. 4 out of the 21 issues remained unresolved in oil royalties, one of them petroleum cash payments, of course oil, minerals and oil fields as well. To what extent, Datuk, can you tell us whether these things will be resolved, these items will be resolved? Because they do relate back to the well-being of the state and the people.

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

Well, when I, when we set up this party, it was based on the demand for the rights of Sabah and Sabahan too. When we spell it out, it doesn't mean we want to become very parochial. Sort of like neglecting those people coming from, Malaysians, from Peninsula. No, it is only within good intentions, what was right? What was the right of Sabahan when we formed the country, Malaysia. So, part and parcels was MA63 was the whole human part of it. Because if we want to build a nation, touch the heart of all, don't touch the heart of individual. They can touch the heart of the chief minister by giving me a project to me. Petronas, whoever. But, if you touch the heart of Malaysians in Sabah by giving the royalties, which is due to the state of Sabah, not due to the politicians leader, and I can tell you, that this is towards strengthening, building a nation, you know?

I mean, this is what we should do. So that's why I did [inaudible] and discuss with Mahathir when he was then, the prime minister of Malaysia, but he was in principle somehow agreed in, on how to do it, but of course, not to give 20%. But along the way, I even discussed with the president of Petronas, then Tan Sri Datuk Wan Zulkiflee. We have a very good formula, to how to realise that we poss... partially, we can convert that it into stakes, for example, like the 20% that we demand, we promise our people. So I think out of that, what we have already discussed under MA63, 21 issues, almost 17 was already realised, which I'm quite happy, with the that sort of thing. So, I do hope the next, the rest we can do it.

I raised it in parliament the other day when I said, you know, I asked my colleague coming from Sarawak, since the last session when we brought it up in Parliament, the akta.. what do you call it.. the.. uh, Act 1 (2), to where the status of Sabah was not equivalent to other state like Kelantan, Perlis, it was a region by itself, just like Sarawak. So, of course, when we, if we can get it done, so the rights and the status of Sabah and Sarawak will be slightly different from others. That is one of the reason why we have, for example, like, the power for getting people into Sabah through immigrations is still vested with the Chief Minister of Sabah and the Chief Minister of Sarawak. That is to say it is peculiar, but it's different from other states and that's what we need to highlight that, which was signed by our forefathers. I think that was hope the dream of our forefathers, before the formations of Malaysia, this must be realised. So, I do hope that this, some of the issue, and believe that my colleagues in Sabah will definitely support, and I hope those (in) Sarawak, and I do hope that Tan Sri Myudin (Muhyiddin) discussions earlier, and I believed that he was also the cabinet when this issue was brought up, discuss on how best we can get it done, so we will try to pursue that. It's not for Warisan, it's not for me, but is, this is you call building a nation.

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

We're talking this morning to Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, the Founder of Parti Warisan Sabah and the Chief Minister Sabah as well. We'll come back after this, Datuk and talk about why the geopolitical issues as well as more broad national democratic items. BFM 89.9.

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Khoo Hsu Chuang:

BFM 89.9. We are talking this morning to Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, the Founder of Parti Warisan Sabah and also the Chief Minister of the state. Now, Datuk, a lot of news headlines are focused on this U.S - China trade war and the fact that the war ships and the aircraft carriers are now in the

South China Sea, brewing territorial disputes, and some are even saying that this dispute between the Americans and the Chinese could escalate into something more serious. The trouble is, the South China Sea where the warships are, are on the doorstep of Sabah and Sarawak. How closely are you watching these developments and are you making any preparations?

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

Well, actually, I know about these issues quite well because I was briefed by the security, because being the chairman of the Security Council in Sabah, I need to know. Not only about this particular issue, yeah, which is, uh it can endanger not only the security, but also the livelihood of all people in this part of the world. That was what I indicated to some of the leader, then, in the Peninsula. It must be taken seriously. If I'm not mistaken, I don't know whether I did mention this to the foreign minister, I can't recall that, but uh, I did raise this issue and I called the Armed Forces authority and also the police, to ensure that we must not only be well aware of this, but we get our people prepared just in case, in the event. But it must be done in a political kind of diplomacy with our neighboring countries, you know. Because I know it's about dispute on ah, based on resources. But we cannot jeopardise human's life here, you know. But this area, it must be made clear, that is our territorial right, where it is located nearer, as you mentioned just now, just is ah, doorstep from our place. It's not far away. So, one can imagine, if there's uh, an incident happening in that part of world, in that part of the area, it will have some serious impact on not only Sabah, but Sarawak too. I think it's nearer to Sarawak if I'm not mistaken. So I think I've already spelled out and I've indicated my concerns about this. But it must be discussed on the level of uh, G to G, where the federal government must play a very pivotal role to indicate the sovereignty of these things, and it must be to a diplomatic roles rather than hostile, going into, for example, like, if it leads to war, even dispute between China and America. I mean, it is not the Chinese in China who will suffer. It is not American in America who will suffer. It is the Malaysians in Sarawak and Sabah. Life will be seriously affected. So, I do hope that this has, the issues that we need to look into seriously and we have to establish it. Where there is a need for us to bring it to the uh, the International Court of Justice be it, you know. But I believe that it must be resolved, at that the first stage, diplomatically within the big countries, like China and U.S. I think these are the people who are really interested. But it has been there with us. But I believe that we have to resolve this and we cannot be having another war zone in this part of the world. What is happening in Middle East now, and now what is happening in other countries. I think we have to save the world. The people in the world is facing a lot of serious.. we must work together on how to overcome, COVID, for example, like..

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

Well, switching our attention back to the country, Datuk Seri, obviously the political landscape is as volatile as it has ever been, some say that you could be a candidate for Prime Minister if Pakatan comes back to power. Especially since some critics and analysts have suggested that you might even have more conservative Malay support than even Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, what do you think about these comments? What do you think about these are suggestions?

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

Well, I must say that I am honored by all the sort of suggestions that, you know, (there are) millions of Malaysians, and they qualify rather than me to become. But when it was announced by, well, is a world leader, I considered Tun Mahathir, of course. Discussions were held, between Tun and the rest of the PH leaders they thought that I was the solutions ah, to the two - Mahathir and Anwar. So, they were even saying that, well, towards building a nation it has been the dream of our forefathers. You know, not only about talking about royalty of oil, whatever it is, you know, sharing of wealth in the country. We have been independent for how many years, none from Sarawak, none from Sabah, to become, not to mention DPM, or even prime minister too, you know. These are some of the issues that have been lingering in the mind (inaudible). We need to develop Sabah, and Sabah can be the place and an instrument to getting Malaysia to become a very competitive nation because we have resources. We're plenty abundant land and very fertile land too, so one can imagine not only in terms of resources abundant, but its entire locations too, which is nearer to China, which is nearer to Japan and nearer to Brunei and even nearer to new capital city of Indonesia, Kalimantan. So, if you look into it, if we were used, us, you know, if I may say use, as a place where it can lift up Malaysia's competitiveness in terms of trading, in terms of getting more revenue, why not? So, that's why I was thinking, along the line, let me focus into the (inaudible) not only for Sabah, but I'm quite sure, I think, you know, the bulk of the resources, if we were to export, it goes into federal funding anyway. It doesn't go to Sabah totally.

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

Well, it does look like the stars are aligning, Datuk, for a, for the potential of an East Malaysian prime minister, for the first time in the country's history. If it does happen and the stars do align, and you do become prime minister, would you, I guess, leverage your position as the first East Malaysian to tackle a lot, a lot of uncomfortable issues, including, perhaps even potentially, de-politicising ethnic issues, and dividing the country along racial lines and ethnic lines.

Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal:

Well, I have already indicated that one of the reason why I set up this, ah, Warisan, it's a multiracial party. Because the important part that if you have a country and a nation based on so many races in diversity, in terms of religious belief, the important part is not only to build economy. One of the top priority, you must unite the people first. You can't realise economic development. You can't realise human capital development if you don't have unity among the various races in any nation. So I think, is indeed very crucial is very important for us to do that, so uniting the Malaysian, to both race and religion, that is one of the top priority when I look at it. For the country to go forward, to move forward. To be very competitive. We have seen that during the era of Tun Mahathir, then, you know, when he was then the prime minister, we were new tiger, considered to be. We were able to

compete with other big nations in the world. Why was that realised? I think this is where, I think, if you use race and religious kind of, uh, factors, perspective, then it's going to be very divisive. Nothing that you can realise. That's why I said, I raised in Parliament the other day, when I'd indicate that you don't blame the Chinese to become rich, you know. They worked for it, they earn, they are Malaysians too. Any Malaysians, for that matter. You know, irrespective of race and religion. You can't be, you know, criticizing others for having a better life just because they earn it and because they have different races, you know? I mean, for example, like there are good Indian doctors in Malaysia, there are good Indian lawyers too, in Malaysia. But you can't blame them because they achieve well in education. How many Indians become minister of education in Malaysia since independent? I mean, you can't blame Bill Gates being a billionaire just because he's an American. But one can be a billionaire coming from Malaysia, if we work hard, if we unite ourselves. Put aside. Of course, we love our religion. Of course, we love our race, but it is between us and God, you know. But that cannot be a venue where we can be divided and it's not good for generations to come. So, we need to inculcate that sort of values, to realise we're building a nation. We're not building a race here.

Khoo Hsu Chuang:

Well, thank you, Datuk Seri. Good luck with the upcoming Sabah elections and all of us in Malaysia do hope for the day comes when the country really truly is united and progressive. Thank you for talking to us.

We had with us Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, Founder of Parti Warisan Sabah and also the Chief Minister of Sabah.

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