Burnham's reopening of Brexit debate is 'biggest boost in my career', says Farage
Ben Quinn – The Guardian – October 1st 2026

Nigel Farage, the Reform UK leader, has claimed that Andy Burnham has given him "the biggest boost in my career" by reviving the Brexit debate. The prime minister's pledges to the Labour conference and admission on Wednesday that rejoining the EU was among options the government would look at had put "put me back into the debate", he said.

Dismissing polls showing that as much as 59% of the public favoured rejoining the EU, Farage told the Guardian: "Of course they do, until you tell them it'll cost 25bn quid a year, until you tell him it'll mean joining Schengen [the area of Europe that has open borders], until he tells them it will mean actually having to recommit to joining the euro.

"Remember that the leavers haven't made their arguments since 2016. The 'remoaners' have made their arguments every single week. I actually think that Burnham has made a very big political mistake here."

While the Reform UK leader said he believed Burnham had calculated that new language on the EU might help win back voters from the Greens in big cities, Farage added: "Here in Doncaster and across the 'red wall' in the north and Midlands, I think he's opened up a huge flank to us."

To cheers from hundreds of Reform supporters who gathered inside an event space at Doncaster racecourse, Farage said: "Today I'm back on the road and today is when our general election campaign starts." There were even bigger cheers when Farage said he would relish – "Bring it on, I say" – the prospect of fighting Burnham in red wall areas such as Doncaster on the issue of rejoining the EU. "He might just have given me the biggest boost in my career I've ever had. Thank you, Andy, if you're watching."

The focus of the rally – "100 days to save Britain" – had been planned before Burnham's announcement about UK-EU relations. However, Reform sources claim that the prime minister's intervention has energised them and that specific donors are already discussing how they can fund a rerun of the 2016 campaign.

Meanwhile, Farage strongly hinted that Reform's internal inquiry into the donations controversy that has overshadowed the party this year would absolve two key aides and that legal action would be launched against journalists involved. Indicating that he had already seen the report and knew its conclusions, Farage said its release was "imminent". "It's been done. It'll be out in public very soon and I think some of your co-conspirators might find themselves with one or two legal challenges," he told a Channel 4 journalist among reporters who questioned him.

Reform was rocked on the eve of its party conference after some of Farage's team were filmed appearing to plot to avoid electoral laws on foreign donations in an undercover investigation broadcast by Channel 4 News.

The Metropolitan police are carrying out a criminal investigation into Reform over allegations it broke foreign funding laws.