

SUPP chief pledges party to stay with BN
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KUCHING - Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) president Dr George Chan (left) has quashed rumours that the troubled party would quit Sarawak BN.

Chan pledged that SUPP will still be with BN.

He said as far as he is concerned, he has never said about getting out of BN as SUPP and PBB have been partners since 1970..

It was learnt that he met with PM Najib Abdul Razak on Sept 2 over land issues, education grant for Chinese, mission and Agama schools in Sarawak and on economics concerning projects.

When asked, he said he knows what the people want and what makes a good government.

Earlier on, at 4pm, Chan met up with four of his Kuching Central Committee leaders which included secretary general Senator Sim Kheng Hui, newly promoted assistant minister Tan Joo Phoi who is also the state assemblyman for Batu Kawa, publicity chief Alfred Yap and Lily Yong, vice chairperson.

The one and half hour meeting ended with Sim and Lily coming out of Chan's office at the SUPP Headquarter distributing a press statement in English and Mandarin.

The statement said to be from Chan reads: "I have seen the Prime Minister recently on some of the federal issues affecting our communities. He understands our problems and has responded positively to them. I will also see the Chief Minister on some of the issues pertaining to the State and I believe that the Chief Minister will also respond positively to them".

Sim refused to talk to the press and said Chan is the right person to answer questions and left with Lily.

Chan and Yap continued to talk in his office for 15 minutes and Lily returned to the office. At about 5.50 pm, Chan got out and refused to talk to reporters.

Taking big steps to his car, Chan, who was heard sighing, said it was all in the statement and he did not want to be misquoted. However, he clarified that SUPP is still with BN unless something happens which he did not elaborate.

Chan was said to have met Najib early last month but apparently he did not. He went on a long holiday and early this month upon returning, he did meet up with the PM. Even though the meeting did not transpire early last month, it has set tongues wagging that SUPP is going to get out of BN.

Chan returned to Miri on Saturday and at a function with Miri Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Chan lashed out at the apple polishing culture which caused the government to lose touch with the people.

SUPP has been at its lowest ebb since it lost 8 of the 19 seats contested in the state elections in 2006.

Losing the confidence of the Chinese, SUPP managed to scrap through after losing one Parliamentary seat, Kuching, in the general election. However, it has been plagued with its own internal problems starting with a Team A and Team B split after the elections, over the leadership power struggle .

A no-confidence motion was moved in 2006 against Chan who offered to step down but in 2008, during the party's Triennial Delegate's conference, the central committee remains status quo except for the change in the Youth and Women wings.

Then the Sibü and Dudong squabbles started after Sibü SUPP disallowed Dudong to set up its own branch. The squabbles last for over three years and a truce was called this year.

Its popularity slide further when in May this year, the Sibü by-election was won by DAP, a seat that was considered a stronghold for SUPP.

After the loss, the party has to bear with snide remarks from its own coalition party with one youth leader calling it a mosquito party through the media.

During a BN retreat in Mulu in June this year, the Chief Minister was said to have 'lectured' the party for its problems which further demoralized the leaders and members. - MM

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