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'Ex-federal minister failed to be CM'

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Najib: He left Umno to pursue his ambition of becoming Sabah chief minister

SANDAKAN: A former federal minister has formed a party only to achieve his ambition of becoming the Sabah chief minister, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Prime Minister said the leader, formerly from Umno, had told him of his aspiration and when he failed to get the post, left to pursue his ambition.

"His new political platform has nothing to do with Barisan Nasional not doing its job for the people. He is just pursuing his personal agenda," Najib said at a ceremony at the Taman Batu Sapi People's Housing Programme (PPR) here yesterday.

It was an apparent reference to Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, the Semporna MP and former Rural and Regional Development Minister.

Shafie quit Umno last year and is

now Parti Warisan Sabah president.

Najib, who did not name Shafie throughout his speech, said the Opposition mainly discredited the Government and misled the people into believing that they must support the pact.

Picking up the local Bajau and Suluk phrase *mau baugug* which means to support or help one another, he said the leader only now came to ask for support in Batu Sapi but "as Batu Sapi Umno chief Datuk Samsudin Yahya said, he was never seen there when he was in the Government".

Samsudin had, in his speech earlier, openly criticised Shafie.

Najib noted that Umno and Barisan had ruled in continuity, and while leaders came and went, the institution kept providing develop-

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Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak

ment and stability to the *rakyat*.

"As Prime Minister, I have to come to Sabah and Sarawak and I want the states to develop quickly to be on a par with peninsular Malaysia.

"We have a lot of work to do and we cannot do it in the twinkling of an eye," he said before taking a dig at a former prime minister of 22

years and asking what he had done for Sabah.

Najib said since becoming prime minister, he had pushed for the Pan-Borneo Highway, schools, bridges and many other projects.

"The Opposition is good only at painting a bad picture of the Barisan government but some people who followed them lost out," he said.

He cited the example of the 35 residents who objected to the Taman Kerinchi residency project in Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur, who were to exchange their dilapidated flats for new ones.

"Under the Opposition's influence, these residents went to court to stop it but they lost.

"The others who accepted the offer are today enjoying a new flat worth RM500,000 while their old place was only worth RM50,000."

The Opposition, he continued, had claimed Malaysia was a failed state but in the latest index by Bloomberg, Malaysia had moved up two rungs to 23rd as one of the world's most innovative economies.

He said even the Saudi Ruler had chosen Malaysia as the first stop in his inaugural visit to this region and Japan.

"If we are a failed state, would the king visit us?" he asked.

Later, Najib made a symbolic handing over of keys to 10 residents of the PPR that has 180 units, including five handicap-friendly units.

Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar said that in Sabah, 26 PPR projects had been completed, eight were in progress and four still in the planning stage.