

**Utusan mocks Nik Aziz over his age**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Melissa Chi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 11 — Umno-owned daily Utusan Malaysia today mocked and poked fun at PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat for wanting to contest in the next general elections, despite turning 80 this year.

“Kelantan Mentri Besar Nik Aziz Nik Mat, who is elderly, still wants to contest in the 13th General Elections. Unbelievable but that’s the reality.

“The decision has been made. He has been a representative for more than 40 years, what more does he want?

“Once upon a time, Nik Aziz mocked a few Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders as power crazy. Looks like he is worse than that,” wrote its editors, under the pseudonym “Awang Selamat”.

Some of BN’s long-serving leaders include Sarawak Chief minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, who has been part of the state administration since it joined Malaysia in 1963, and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, who is Malaysia’s longest-serving MP after being elected in 1969.

Nik Aziz, who became Kelantan MB in 1990, was first elected as Kelantan Hilir MP in 1967 but no longer sits in Parliament.

“Awang does not mind if the Tok Guru is still healthy. Go ahead. But he should admit that physically he is getting weaker, his mind is not as sharp as it once was, his hearing and speech are also not as good.

“Rumour has it that even giving speeches is a chore because of his old age,” said Awang in his column published in the paper’s Sunday edition Minggu Malaysia.

Nik Aziz announced on December 5 his intention to contest in the coming general election.

Rejecting Umno pressure for him to relinquish his spot, he said there was no need for him to do so.

The 80-year-old leader continues to be popular both in the state and nationally, where he is often considered the face of the Islamist party and its brand of Islam.

The Malay-language newspaper also said that ever since Nik Aziz held the post of the Kelantan Mentri Besar from 1990, there hasn’t been much accomplishment or progress in the state.

“His greatness is seen only through his lectures that compensate for his weaknesses by attacking others,” Awang said.

He also pointed out the ongoing issue with the lack of access to clean water in Kelantan.

“I wonder what is behind Nik Aziz’s decision to contest again. Does he think that Kelantan PAS will continue to rely on his charisma to defend the state?

"The question is does Nik Aziz still have the charisma or will it turn disastrous for PAS?" Awang said.

Umno has tasked federal minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed with wresting back the state it lost to PAS in Election 1990.

Both parties have embarked on aggressive campaigns to promote their respective candidates for the state's top spot ahead of the anticipated general election.

National polls are not due until 2013, but speculation is rife that the Najib administration will call one early next year before the brunt of the global economic crisis hits the country.

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