

**Lajim should just quit all, say Sabah BN leaders**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**July 29, 2012**  
**By Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 29 — Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders are calling for their colleague, Datuk Seri Lajim Ukin to decide on his stand and quit Umno like a “gentleman”.

Lajim, who is an Umno supreme council member, caused a stir yesterday when he announced that he was giving up all his positions in Umno and BN to work with federal opposition Pakatan Rakyat (PR) for Sabah’s interest.

The Sabah lawmaker had however said he will let the ruling party decide on his party membership and post as a deputy minister.

Sabah’s BN secretary Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan told The Malaysian Insider yesterday that he was “not shocked”, adding that “it’s a non-event in Sabah. The news has been going on for the last few months.”

“I think Datuk Seri Lajim can’t have his cake and eat it too. He has to make a decision,” said Abdul Rahman in the telephone interview, adding that he “is becoming a laughing stock”.

“To me, he is a very confused politician. On one hand, he’s relinquishing his jobs. On the other hand, making speeches criticising BN yet still want to hold on to his deputy minister position.”

Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak was more direct, writing in an email: “I called on Datuk Lajim to quit the party since he no longer subscribes to the party’s goals and policies.”

The Sabah Umno deputy liaison chief said that Lajim “should just quit Umno as a gentleman would” if he “openly disagrees with the party stand” and “tacitly wants to work with the opposition instead.”

Salleh said Lajim “should not wait to be sacked,” claiming that he “wants to act like a hero and...tell the people that he was sacked while fighting for the rights of the people.”

“I also dismissed allegations by Lajim that Umno and the BN had not done anything for the welfare of the people.”

He pointed out that Lajim “was part and parcel of the system for some 18 years and he did not complain before.”

Yesterday, Lajim was reported by Keadilan Daily to have said :“From now on, I resign from all posts in Umno because (I am) no longer confident that the party is able to take care of Sabahans.”

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had yesterday said a decision on Lajim’s position as deputy housing and local government minister would be made on Monday, even as he played down the withdrawal of the Sabah veteran at a crucial point ahead of elections speculated to be held in September, after Muslims celebrate Aidilfitri.

"I am not surprised by his decision. In any case no one is bigger than the party and it is loyalty that counts," said the BN president.

"Nevertheless, as an experienced party, we can overcome this challenge," Najib was quoted as saying by Bernama.

When asked to comment on Lajim's new political movement Pakatan Perubahan Sabah (PPS), Dahlan said he has a "right to select a platform for himself."

Lajim and United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation's (UPKO) Datuk Seri Wilfred Mojilip Bumburing will be launching two new political fronts Pakatan Perubahan Sabah (PPS) and Angkatan Perubahan Sabah (APS) in Beaufort and Tuaran respectively later today, PKR-run news portal Keadilan Daily reported last night.

PKR de facto chief Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is expected to be present as a special guest, according to his party's official news site.

This morning, the Opposition Leader was reported to be with Bumburing in Tuaran, according to a tweet by PKR's Rembau branch chief Badrul Hisham Shaharin.

"DS @anwaribrahim slesai mesy.dgn MPN PKR Sabah kini siap utk ke Rest.Singgah Singgarung Jln Pantai Dalit Tuaran bsama DS Wilfred M Bumburing", Badrul wrote on social network site Twitter. (DS @anwaribrahim finish meeting with MPN PKR Sabah now ready to (go to) Singgah Singgarung Restaurant (at) Jalan Pantai Dalit Tuaran with DS Wilfred M Bumburing).

Anwar, who aims to take federal power in the next general elections that must be called by next April, had flown into the BN's eastern stronghold late last night and is expected to grace the two launches today.

Lajim's PPS, scheduled to be launched at 6pm in Beaufort, is composed of mostly Malay Muslim members while Bumburing's APS, slated to kick off earlier at 1pm, is seen to be dominated by the Kadazan-Dusun-Murut community.

With this move, the two seasoned politicians are sending out signals that they no longer have qualms with shifting their allegiances away from the powerful BN coalition that has held sway for the past half a century, since Malaysia was formed in 1963.

Lajim is an Umno Supreme Council member, while Bumburing is deputy president of UPKO, a BN component party.

Both of them have previously been coy about joining PKR, but had quit their positions in BN.

Lajim yesterday resigned as Beaufort Umno division chief and Beaufort BN chairman with immediate effect, after having quit his Kerambai Kebatu Umno branch chief post earlier.

Bumburing, who is also Tuaran MP, had relinquished his BN division chief post last week.

Both are seen as vocal champions of Sabah's issues.

In Sabah, the deep-seated issue of illegal immigrants who have been fast-tracked for citizenship will likely be used as a key campaign issue in the coming polls.

The Najib administration had agreed to set up a royal inquiry panel on the issue last year but the ire from native-born citizens has been building up as Putrajaya is seen to drag its feet in carrying out investigations.

Federal seats in east Malaysia's Sabah and Sarawak are expected to be PR's focal point come the elections as both states, including the federal territory of Labuan, make up a whopping 57 seats, or 25 per cent of the 222 parliamentary seats available.

In Election 2008, BN retained power over the Putrajaya administrative capital largely due to wins in east Malaysia and Labuan, where it made a near-clean sweep, winning 55 seats against PR's two.

But the ruling pact lost its customary two-thirds parliamentary majority after only securing a five-seat margin ahead of PR in the peninsula, winning in just 85 constituencies while PR secured 80 seats.

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