

**Sabah BN leaders' exit spells trouble for Najib, says Pakatan leaders**  
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**By Nomy Nozwir and Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 29 — The resignation of two senior Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders from the ruling coalition comes at an inopportune time for BN just as the coalition is gearing up for the polls.

"The latest episode of open rebellion by Sabah BN leaders is ominous for Najib as with his 'fixed deposit' in Sabah, the inevitability of BN's downfall is coming sooner rather than later," said DAP's national publicity secretary Tony Pua.

Earlier this afternoon in Sabah, Tuaran MP Datuk Seri Wilfred Bumburing announced that he was leaving BN and pledged his support for Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

Datuk Seri Lajim Ukin, an Umno supreme council member, had yesterday said he was resigning from all party positions.

Both politicians are setting up new PR- friendly political movements — Bumburing's Angkatan Perubahan Sabah (APS) launched this afternoon while Lajim will be launching his Pakatan Perubahan Sabah (PPS) in Beaufort this evening.

Pua appeared to be suggesting that Bumburing and Lajim were disgruntled and had lost confidence in Datuk Seri Najib Razak's leadership as BN president.

"Najib's hold on power is looking increasingly untenable by the day, especially with the continuing postponement of the election since last year," Pua told The Malaysian Insider today.

"In fact, the longer he delays polls, (there will be) more disgruntlement among its members and leaders, with increasing loss of confidence in his leadership (or lack of)," he said.

PKR's strategic director Rafizi Ramli said that this latest "development is not only big in Sabah" as it will boost PR's chances of taking over Putrajaya in the upcoming general elections.

"With Wilfred Bumburing also quitting, you will see a united force that will strengthen Pakatan Rakyat," he said in a phone interview.

"When they (Lajim and Bumburing) leave BN, they will bring substantial (numbers of) supporters with them.

"This will significantly shift the prospects for elections in Sabah with easily 10 Parliamentary seats endangered (for BN) in Sabah."

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PAS's vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar also concurred with his allies in PR.

"This shows they are making a new momentum for Sabah and Malaysia without Umno and BN," he said.

He also said that Najib will likely delay elections as the prime minister will need time to resolve this "serious" issue.

"I believe if (Najib) waits (any) longer, their (Lajim and Bumburing's) actions will spread to become bigger. Whether it's snap polls or not, this will benefit PR."

The country has been kept guessing about the date of the 13th general elections which must be called by April, with The Malaysian Insider recently reporting that it could be held in September after Aidilfitri celebrations.

Federal seats in East Malaysia's Sabah and Sarawak are expected to be PR's focal point when the elections take place, 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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