

05 OCT 2001

Mustapa-Puteri

MANY PAS MEMBERS' CHILDREN JOINING PUTERI UMNO QUIETLY, SAYS MUSTAPA

KOTA BAHARU, Oct 5 (Bernama) -- Many Kelantan PAS members' children have joined Puteri Umno on the quiet despite strong opposition from family members, State Umno liaison chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said today.

He said the State Umno had received many reports that family members from PAS objected strongly to their children joining Puteri Umno, an off-shoot of Wanita Umno.

"This is an encouraging development as it clearly showed the younger generation is not happy with the state of affairs in Kelantan and with the ruling party PAS.

"Hence, some children of opposition party members have quietly and openly embraced Puteri Umno," he told reporters after launching Kelantan Puteri Umno.

Puteri Umno has more than 5,000 members in Kelantan.

He said the setting up of Puteri Umno had boosted Umno's membership.

"If there's no puteri, the membership increase will not be this drastic. The presence of Puteri Umno will enhance Kelantan Umno's position and can pose a challenge to Kelantan PAS," he said.

He said Umno supreme council members were going down to the divisions nationwide as part of the campaign to increase party membership, especially Puteri Umno members.

The Kelantan Puteri Umno expected to have 10,000 members by year-end had to work hard to emerge as a strong and active Umno wing, he added.

In her speech, Puteri Umno pro tem head Azalina Othman Said said the movement had more members particularly from opposition-held areas as many children of opposition party members had joined Puteri Umno.

"This showed a change in the thinking of the young Malay women in the country. This is also a recognition that Umno is the only Malay party that struggled for women issues," he said.

Till last August, there were more than 80,000 Puteri Umno members and the number was growing as membership forms are being collected from the divisions.

"We do not have a specific target. What we intend to do is to organise courses, trainings and information sessions on their responsibility and party struggles in preparation for Puteri members to go to the ground in the 2004 general election," she said.

Azalina said Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would be informed of every development in Puteri Umno.

She said Puteri Umno was thankful to Wanita Umno for its assistance in recruiting members for the newly-launched movement.

The Puteri Umno constitution would provide for the movement's members to be automatic Wanita Umno members upon reaching 35.

-- BERNAMA

BD TS