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Puteri's mission to provide continuity to Umno's struggles

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AZEEM spent half a day looking for a pink batik shirt on Friday. The invitation card advised guests to come in shirts or dresses with a trace of pink, the preferred colour of Puteri Umno.

Azeem was one of many who were invited to the official launching of Puteri Umno at the Dewan Merdeka, the main hall of the Putra World Trade Centre. He finally found a pink-based long-sleeved batik shirt of his size at his tailor.

The supreme council member proudly told friends that he went out of his way to get the pink shirt. Indeed, many people went out of their way to abide by Puteri Umno's dress code.

The Dewan Merdeka that night was a sea of pink as members of Umno's latest wing came out in force to mark its birth. Ushers were dressed in pink baju kurung and kebaya; performers wore pink; as did the emcee for the night, Ras Adiba Radzi.

Guests were given pink scarves and pink sashes. When Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad walked in for the ceremony, he took out his pink scarf to wave at the crowd.

While waiting for Dr Mahathir's arrival, Puteri members were enjoying themselves.

They took turns to chant their State names and wave their State flags. When one group finished, another took up the cry. It helped to lend more excitement to the occasion.

It was a different atmosphere altogether - young, happy, energetic. One cannot but get good vibes from the enthusiasm shown by Puteri members on their debut night. In fact, they gave a splendid account of themselves with their fresh presentation.

The launching wasn't just a "rah-rah-rah" occasion. Soon after guests settled down, a nine-year-old girl recited verses from the Quran followed by a doa which had the hall in silence.

It was under such sober yet enthusiastic environment that Puteri Umno was born. The speeches were limited to two, both well argued and articulated.

Puteri chief Azalina Othman Said came out strongly pledging her movement's total commitment to the party and its struggles.

A sajak - Puteri Tidak Lupa - was then recited, which was followed by the pop-like rendition of the Puteri Umno song. If the lyrics of the song were to be changed to something less political, I'm sure the song will inch its way up the pop charts.

A lot of thought was given to the launching ceremony. The sajak, in particular, was in response to the one read out by Dr Mahathir in his winding-up speech at the June Umno annual delegates assembly.

Titled Melayu Mudah Lupa, Dr Mahathir lamented at the Malay community's tendency to forget that they were once an oppressed and deprived lot.

The sajak was Puteri's declaration that it would not allow its members and the people to ever forget Umno's struggles, sacrifices and achievements. In other words, Puteri has set out a mission for itself - to provide continuity to the party's struggles.

Part of the sajak says:

Restuilah perjuangan kami ini untuk mereka  
Kerana daulat dan maruah bangsa masih ada  
dan akan ada sampai bila-bila ...

