

Ex-women's minister Najib bags 'sexist' award

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By Koh Jun Lin

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is named as one of the six winners at the annual 'sexist' awards today, bagging the "insulting intelligence" category by a 'landslide victory'.

This was over his claim in October last year as the then-women's minister that "There is no need for a women's rights movement in Malaysia because equality has been given from the start."

Announcing the award winners in stand-up comedy style, Miss Ribena Berry added, "He (Najib) said that is why in Malaysia, it is the men who is the endangered species.

"I know some of the men in parliament are like orang utan, but they are not endangered, you know?"

aiyo what lah award 260513Ribena Berry (left), which is the stage name for the playwright Jo Kukathas, also chastised Najib for not knowing his facts and pointed out Malaysia is ranked 100 out of 135 in the 2012 Global Gender Gap Report.

She said Najib had won the award by a 'landslide', but did not disclose the number of votes he garnered.

The award, dubbed "Aiyoh... What Lah?! Awards", is an initiative by the coalition of women's rights NGOs Joint Action Group on Gender Equality (JAG).

It is meant raise awareness on what constitutes sexism, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia by highlighting such instances in public discourse.

Besides the six 'sexist' awards, there is also a "On the right track" award to highlight efforts to curb such discrimination.

Of these, then-deputy education minister Mohd Puad Zarkashi is the most-nominated person for the awards for his attacks against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual community (LGBT), including officially launching an infamous 'guideline' to identify homosexuals, and likening the Pakatan Rakyat coalition as a "gay marriage".

However, he did not win any awards, of which two nominations were in the "Enough Already!" category, and one is in the "Insulting Intelligence" category.

The winners of the other categories are:

Foot in Mouth: Then de facto Law Minister Nazri Abdul Aziz, who claimed that he does not know about the alleged links between his son Nedim and timber tycoon Michael Chia because he is not gay and does not sleep with his son.

Poking fun at Nazri, Ribena Berry said it was akin to saying that one must be gay to know one's son, so it is better not to know what are the children up to.

She added, "But I don't understand why he thinks all the people who are gay are also pedophile. He cannot tell the difference between gays and pedophiles, but he should know!

"If you are a paedophile, you will be released if you have a bright future!"

azlanShe was making a reference to a court verdict in August last year, where a Court of Appeal decision to allow national bowler Noor Afizal Azizan to be bound over for good behavior and escape a jail sentence for statutory rape against a 13-year old girl.

The decision has also earned the appellate court a special mention in today's award ceremony, for "exemplary conduct in upholding the rights of rapists."

"This is why you must tell your children that they must study very hard. If they study hard, they will have a 'bright future' and they can do anything in Malaysia. They are settled for life," said Ribena Berry.

Policy Fail: Kota Baru Municipal Council, for issuing a summons to a female hairdresser for cutting a male customer's hair.

NONE"They say that this is to prevent 'unhealthy interaction', but I think if you want 'action', you cannot 'action' with the hair.

"Personally speaking, if (movie star) Johnny Depp comes and wants to cut my hair, of course I will be excited, but not because he wants to cut my hair but because he is Johnny Depp.

"I can tell the difference between Johnny Depp and my hair getting excited," said Ribena Berry.

The local by-law mandating such gender-segregation has since been suspended following public outcry.

Cannot Ignore: High Court Judge Zamani Abdul Rahim, for absolving a kindergarten operator of allegedly raping a four-year old on the basis that "women have a tendency to exaggerate about a sexual act," and that the victim's testimony is unreliable.

Unlike the other nominees and winners, there was no laughter from the full house crowd of close to 100 as Ribena Berry spelled out Zamani's citation for the award. Instead, there was silence.

"Cannot laugh isn't it?" she said, "Nothing to laugh. In Malaysia, as usual we like to blame the victim. Even if the victim is four-years old, we want to blame them. This is not funny, this is so unfunny.

"The men ruling our court, sometimes I think they are sick people. Sorry, I shouldn't say that, but I do think so."

Least Helpful to the Sisterhood: Former women's minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, over her statement that "It is because of the achievements of the Umno-BN government that... we don't need to be (women's) activists, we don't need to burn our bras to achieve gender equality."

She said this in her winding-up speech at the Umno general assembly last year.

NONERibena Berry countered that gender equality had improved in Malaysia not because of the BN government, but in spite of it.

"What does she think all these women's groups have been doing all these years? Knitting ar? Malaysia is too hot for knitting.

"They have not been burning bras? Why would you want to blame them and say they burn their bras? At least the bras give them support, which is more than Shahrizat gives!" she said.

Enough Already: The award goes to a series of harassments and misogynistic attacks targeting Bersih co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan between April 23 to June 27, following the April 28 Bersih 3.0 rally.

These include then PAS central committee member Nasharuddin Mat Isa's

statement that Ambiga is unfit to lead the Bersih movement because of alleged links to the LGBT community, a 'butt exercise' and other protests in front of her house, a fracas at an event where Ambiga is due to speak, and then Sri Gading MP Mohamad Aziz's statement that Ambiga should hang as a traitor.

aiyo what lah award 260513Upon announcing the award, Ribena Berry walked over to Ambiga, who was among the audience, and crammed her arm full of trophies until she could not carry it anymore. She then handed more trophies to the person seated next to her.

"Why so many!?" Ambiga laughed and remarked, to which Ribena Berry replied, "These are not for Ambiga. These are for Ambiga to give to all those people."

Right on Track: The Malaysian Parliament, for amending its Standing Orders to ban sexist remarks in the house.

"Poor (Kinabatangan MP) Bung Mokhtar Radin. What are you going to talk about? Got nothing to say anymore.

"Personally, I would like to give an award to all those in Sabah who had voted for him, but never mind, it is called democracy...

"So finally, there is a law that they cannot say sexist things. I hope soon there will be one for racism, that would be very nice. Let's hope so," said Ribena Berry in announcing the award.

She was referring to Bung Mokhtar's infamous sexist remarks about another female parliamentarian's menses in 2007 during a parliamentary debate.

Meanwhile, in a statement released later, All Women's Action Society (Awam) assistant program officer Hew Li-Sha said, "It's interesting to note that the winning statements in the 'Insulting Intelligence' and 'Least Helpful to the Sisterhood' categories received a thumping victory compared to the other nominees.

"This clearly shows the outright rejection by the public on the government's syok sendiri (self-indulgent) statements in regard to their contribution in advancing the rights of woman."

Awam is one of nine NGOs that make up the JAG.

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