

## **'I too am not alone', fights back Azizah**

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**By Susan Loone**

PMTG PAUH Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail may be a petite woman, but now her fangs are out as she fights off claim after claim that threaten her chances of victory in Permatang Pauh.

In particular she is unhappy to be described as a "blind loyalist" to her husband, jailed PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Last night at the anti-GST (goods and services tax) ceramah in Seberang Jaya, Azizah spoke with a firm voice and asked that she not be insulted during the campaign.

"Do not insult me, do not say I am a blind loyalist. I am not blind".

She was referring to allegations by a group of residents from Kajang, her constituency as assemblyperson, who claimed she merely obeys Anwar's orders.

"Anwar went through the same (sodomy) allegations twice - there were many things which were not right about his case," she said.

"Why should I follow BN and believe what they say about Anwar?" she asked the 500 who turned up for the ceramah.

Anwar was first jailed for abuse of power related to his first sodomy charge, from 2001 to 2006.

During his absence, Azizah contested his Permatang Pauh seat in the 1999, 2004 and 2008 national polls.

She was victorious in all three, but vacated her seat in July 31, 2008 to allow Anwar to recontest the seat for him to return to active politics.

She remained as PKR president since 1999, and her post was never challenged in the party's triennial internal elections.

Wan Azizah now faces three candidates - Umno's Suhaimi Sabudin, PRM's Azman Shah Othman and independent Salleh Isahak - vying for the parliamentary seat that goes to polls on May 7.

Early voting is on May 3. Anwar lost the seat when he failed to obtain royal pardon for his early release from jail.

**'I am not alone'**

Azizah also refuted an obscure news portal which alleged that Azizah was “lonely and alone” on her campaign trail, which has entered its sixth day today.

To show she was neither lonely nor alone, Azizah roped in several top Pakatan leaders to join her on stage as she delivered her short speech at the Tapak Expo.

Among them were PKR deputy chief Azmin Ali, central committee member Xavier Jayakumar, Seberang Perai assemblyperson Afif Bahardin, PAS deputy chief Mohamed ‘Mat’ Sabu, PAS central committee member Hatta Ramli, Penang PAS commissioner Mujahid Yusof Rawa, DAP’s political secretary to the Penang chief minister Wong Hon Wai, Batu Kawan MP Kasthuri Pato and Seri Delima assemblyperson RSN Rayer.

Last night at a dinner organised by PAS at Cross Street, Permatang Pasir, these leaders also sang Azizah’s praises.

Azmin said Azizah is not an ordinary woman.

“A nation can be rotten because of corrupt leaders but Azizah lived a simple life compared to others,” said the Selangor menteri besar.

Mahfuz described Azizah as Permatang Pauh’s “most suitable candidate” to take over Anwar's baton.

“Her victory is not only important for Permatang Pauh, but also the whole country,” said the Pokok Sena MP.

“All these years, Azizah and her family have suffered so much because of the struggle,” he added.

### **'You too, Muhyiddin?'**

Hatta, who is PAS election director, reminded that Kak Wan was the founding president of PKR when the party was launched before the 1999 national polls.

She was also the country’s first female opposition leader, he said.

She is committed to the struggle until now although her opponents, including Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, try to belittle her ability, he added.

Apart from BN’s strategy to portray Azizah as living in her husband’s shadow, Muhyiddin has kicked off a campaign to undermine Azizah by questioning her ability to juggle two constituencies.

However Hatta called the DPM’s bluff pointing out, “If they say she cannot take care of two constituencies, how about Muhyiddin?”

“He is DPM in Putrajaya, but needs to serve his voters in Pagoh as he is the MP there,” he said.

Hatta said Pakatan works as a team in Parliament, so the question of whether Azizah can serve Permatang Pauh as MP and Kajang as assemblyperson at the same time does not arise at all.

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