

**Why Puteri Reformasi opted out of PKR Youth
Malaysiakini.com
September 9, 2010**

The absence of Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar from the final line-up of the team led by Rafizi Ramli vying for PKR Youth central posts was bound to raise eyebrows.

nurul izzah interview 090910Seen as the 'elite' team, Generasi Reformasi appeared to be the perfect place for Nurul Izzah (left), seen as among the more prominent members of the youth wing, better known by its Malay acronym of AMK.

But the first-term parliamentarian apparently has something else in mind, choosing instead to battle it out in a four-cornered fight for the Lembah Pantai division chief post.

Speaking to Malaysiakini on Tuesday, Nurul Izzah dismissed speculation that her decision had anything to do with her parents, PKR President Dr Wan Azizah Ismail and party de-facto leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Instead, the Puteri Reformasi's decision to opt out despite "negotiations", it appears, had less to do with family pressure than to prevent the party from becoming subject to a 'personality cult'.

"It's not fair for me to disclose the basic negotiations that took place... One of the weaknesses of the party at the beginning, especially before 2008, was the focus on Anwar Ibrahim.

"It's important to ensure that the second generation of leaders are not focused on one individual. That's why the focus should not be on me," she said.

She admits that the push to inject new blood into the leadership is driven, in parts, by the possibility that Anwar might be sent to prison once more.

"When you work in the confines of a democracy set by the BN you have to be prepared for any possibility. (His incarceration) is a possibility often discussed by the leadership, but we are fighting it.

"We shouldn't dramatise it. It is not just for the president's post but also in AMK, (it's important) for emerging leaders to show whether Keadilan will survive with or not," she said.

Team Harapan Baru

Nurul Izzah appears to want to share the spotlight, even when contesting for the PKR Lembah Pantai chief post alongside her team which bears a familiar name-Harapan Baru.

nurul izzah interview 090910The mixed bag of hopefuls, however, are quick to point out that this not a copycat (ciplak) case but is a name chosen to reflect the situation at Lembah Pantai.

Multiracial and from different socio-economic backgrounds, the team hopes to forge a more diverse culture in PKR Lembah Pantai, reflecting the demographics of the area.

"Lembah Pantai is a microcosm of Malaysia. We have middle class, lower income and higher

income residents. If (PKR) wants to thrive here it has to reflect this...it is not easy but it is the raison d'etre of (PKR)," she said.

Previously an Umno stronghold, the constituency was snatched away by the PKR in the 2008 general election mostly on the back of Malay support from the Kerinchi and Pantai Dalam areas.

Leadership in the division has been somewhat skewed as a result, and is something division AMK chief hopeful Abdullah Izhar Mohamad Yusof wants to rectify.

"Our lineup before did not have a Chinese representative, we had overlooked this," confessed the current Lembah Pantai AMK secretary.

nurul izzah interview 090910 daren chuaThe man for the job, it seems, is new face Daren Chua (right), who crossed over from MCA last year with his father, former health minister Chua Jui Meng.

A long-term resident of Lembah Pantai, Daren feels that his understanding of the issues faced by the community and his willingness to learn outweighs the fact that he is "still grasping" how things work in PKR.

The jovial 35-year-old appears to be already a hit with Chinese residents in the Sentosa area, and was said to have had to be dragged away from a function there on Monday night.

Harapan Baru, however, stresses that their model is not to split the workload by racial boundaries, concentrating instead on issues.

Slugging it out with DBKL

Deputy chairperson candidate Sidik Ibrahim, for example, has been advocating the rights of 78 majority Chinese families in Kampung Manggis.

nurul izzah interview 090910 sidik ibrahimSidik (right), who had been with the party for 12 years, is fighting the Kuala Lumpur City Council (DBKL) which is asking the villagers to vacate their homes even though they have lived there for about 50 years.

The Kampung Manggis issue, said Nurul Izzah, also showcases the inconsistencies of DBKL which along with the Federal Territories and Urban Well-being Ministry call the shots in Kuala Lumpur.

She added that the those facing the same fate in Kerinchi are for some reason offered public housing when Kampung Manggis residents are left out.

Worse still, said Abdullah Izharv (below), these two agencies appear to be working hand in glove with the Umno division, with the letters it issues deemed even more powerful than those from the DBKL.

This was apparent to him as an active member of the Selangor Development Corporation (PKNS) flats residents association.

"The flats belong to PKNS but it is managed by DBKL, with interference from certain parties who use the residents associations to influence the residents to move.

nurul izzah interview 090910 abdullah izhar mohamad yusof "We reviewed the documentation and found that much of the offers protected the interests of these people. So we set up an action committee to make sure this is made known to the residents," he said.

This is not the only PKR-led committee which is seen to have made headway in Lembah Pantai.

In Brickfields, the formation of Little India Action Committee by PKR Lembah Pantai representative had caught the eye of Deputy Federal Territories Minister M Saravanan who has hijacked the idea.

But this does not faze the members of Harapan Baru, who feel their job is to exert pressure on the government to behave-even if it means having their ideas re-branded as BN endeavours.

Hitting the pressure points

Besides using the media to turn the spotlight on the authorities, PKR Lembah Pantai has also provided residents with a directory for DBKL so they too can raise the temperature about their gripes.

Compiling the city council's transgressions also creates awareness of the need for local council elections, which the team will continue to push for, said Nurul Izzah who has picked the tricks in the past two and a half years as MP.

"Right now we need to create more demand for local council election for KL. The more people speak up about it, the more the government will be mindful," she said.

Besides local council elections, Harapan Baru's focus will also be closely tied with the plans of the PKR Federal Territories leadership.

"PKR Federal Territories will come up with (a one-year plan) in the next few weeks, largely on policies affecting housing and public transportation-how to improve and monitor plans for the cut in subsidies. How the government spends it to improve public transportation," she said.

But with each division havin a common focus on these issues already, what about the other teams that will turn the 4200-odd Lembah Pantai members towards Harapan Baru on Sept 26?

"I cannot comment much on that because we are family. With more people contesting, the stronger the party will get," said Sidik, taking the highroad about healthy competition, never mind the mudslinging elsewhere.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/142305>