



**Nurul for No 2: An effect of the tsunami**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**October 15, 2010**

Is Nurul Izzah Anwar a modern Joan of Arc come to rescue a hopelessly jaded polity? We will begin to find out from tomorrow when, as expect, she accepts nominations to contest the

observers  
post of deputy president of PKR.

At 30, Nurul is too young to be projected as having the talent for leadership and the capacity for organisation to rise to the deputy presidency of a party with pretensions to take federal power as first among equals in the Pakatan Rakyat coalition.

But after the tectonic shifts to the political landscape wrought by the tsunami of March 2008, all bets are off on what is possible and what's not in Malaysian politics.

Looked at in this way, Nurul's candidacy is an effect of the political tsunami of March 2008 when the myth of BN's invincibility was broken.

They say before you burn the mist of myths from the body politic, you must pause to see what may fill the void.

Nurul's father, Anwar Ibrahim, with crucial help from Hindraf, put a blowtorch to the myth of BN invincibility in the run-up to the general election of March 8, 2008.

In the wake of that myth's incineration on a glorious day that March, nobody can say for sure what or who is to fill the void.

Some may see this as dangerous; others as exciting – the fecundity of the unexpected.

Will Zaid pull out?

Wednesday night's PKR politburo meeting had waived a technicality – which was disputed anyway – that had threatened to stand in the way of Nurul's securing a second nomination qualifying her to run.

Sarawak's Selangau division had been her first nomination for the post and Semporna's (from Sabah) endorsement, by dint of the waiver, was deemed as not tardy in giving her the second nomination to run.

Now she's qualified to run and a refractory Zaid Ibrahim, if he withdraws from the race, as observers expect, is saved his credibility.

Zaid had vacillated from not wanting to contest at all, to wanting to contest if Selangor MB Khalid Ibrahim did not want to contest, and later, if Nurul, whom he endorsed as "a breath of fresh air", did not want to contest.

Zaid sounded increasingly like a used car salesman hedging a deal with multiple provisos. Acceptance of nominations for the post of PKR deputy president closes tomorrow.

If Nurul enters the race, as many expect, and if Zaid withdraws, then the latter's self-

damaging contortions of recent weeks, would seem not self-interested. It would seem like the prancing of a stalking horse - for Nurul Izzah, not for Zaid Ibrahim.

#### A new generation of reformers

The question then arises: Is Nurul a modern-day Joan of Arc come to the rescue of a frazzled polity, one that is fed-up with the acrid ozone of baseness that has surrounded Malaysian politics ever since her father acquiesced in Dr Mahathir Mohamad's invitation to join Umno in April 1982?

In March the previous year, Anwar, as Abim leader, had led an informal coalition of NGOs and opposition parties in a reasoned and disciplined battle against repressive amendments to the Societies Act, in the waning days of prime minister Hussein Onn's administration.

That battle, albeit unsuccessful, had thrust a young and fresh-faced Anwar to the forefront of Malaysian political consciousness as leading torchbearer of much-needed reform of the Malaysian polity.

But thirteen ('13' is a bad omen in Malaysian parlance) months later, Anwar, in a move that contrived to be simultaneously exciting and troubling, joined Umno at Mahathir's invitation.

The hope of reform, prompted by Anwar's presence at the centre of power rather than at its periphery, turned out to be delusive.

The protracted which has paid conviction hope of

the vision of 1981 Mahathir coming in promise of

Izzah's the father era.



depredations of Mahathir during his tenure as prime minister (1981-2003), in Anwar was partly complicit and for which he through a six-year jailing on a dubious for corruption and sodomy, smothered all reform.

Now as Anwar writhes within PKR and within Pakatan Rakyat coalition to bring to pass his reform, a vision he thrillingly held aloft in before succumbing to the delusions of the demarche, his daughter appears to be from left field, hopefully to resuscitate the the Anwar of the pre-Mahathir era.

Jolting an indifferent mass

The least that can be said about Nurul candidacy is that the daughter rises even as struggles to shed the dross of the Mahathir

One sure way of testing the efficacy of a Nurul Izzah-occupation of the PKR No 2 position is to see that whether with her as the party's surging icon, the 4.4 million - mostly under-35 - Malaysians who have not registered as voters, are spurred to register.

This indifferent mass may well be jolted out of their apathy by somebody as exotic as Nurul. No, this is not being proposed as the definitive test of her suitability for leadership of PKR. But don't be surprised if her magic impacts in this way.

This bloc of the indifferent, far too large a presence in a polity struggling to be reformed, must be jarred out of its complacency.

Nurul may just be that wand that can conjure away their anomie.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/145433>

<b>PKR direct election</b>	
● Aug 27 - Sept 12	<b>Nominations for leadership contest in 205 divisions.</b>
● Sept 17 - Oct 3	<b>All divisions to hold AGMs where elections are held. The division will also make nominations for supreme council's posts. To qualify, a candidate requires nominations from at least two divisions.</b>
● Oct 10	<b>Supreme council nominations closed.</b>
● Oct 24	<b>PKR to announce official national candidates list.</b>
● Oct 29 - Nov 21	<b>Delegates to meet at the divisional level. Voting for 26 supreme council posts to be held, as well as president, deputy president and four vice-presidents. Results to be announced at the end of each elections at the respective divisions.</b>
● Nov 27 -28	<b>PKR 2010 national congress in Shah Alam.</b>
Source: PKR HQ	
Azlan Zamhari / Malaysiakini	