

Nurul Izzah gets celebrity greeting
Malaysiakini.com
Mar 05, 2008
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With just five minutes to go before her arrival at a scheduled MCPX ceramah last night, a sparse crowd of not even 100 had assembled in an empty lot at Kondo Rakyat.

lambah pantai nomination day 240208 nurul izzah Young boys on bicycles weaved through the clusters of neighbours. Well-heeled couples from trendy nearby developments parked their SUVs and leisurely followed the trail of bunting to the illuminated stage. Anwar Ibrahim's voice bellowed from the speaker system but casual conversation comfortably rose above it.

Leaning against parked cars and resting on staircase steps overlooking the parking lot, the crowd looked weary after long days at the office, home and school.

But the roar of honking horns and a deluge of flag-bearing motorcycles pulled people from the terraces of their homes and out of their fatigue to greet Nurul Izzah Anwar.

periasamy lambah pantai independent 040308 nurul izzah poster As she descended from her campaign van, dozens of outstretched hands tried to capture her on mobile phones and handheld cameras or, better yet, shake her hand as she passed by. Women of all ages and backgrounds seemed suddenly endowed with the boldness to push their way to her side.

Her presence seemed to magnetize the crowd and by the time she took the stage, it had multiplied from barely 100 to upwards of 250.

nurul izzah lambah pantai campaign leaflet 270208 Instead of a novice politician soliciting support for her race against a tried and true incumbent, Nurul Izzah looked like a celebrity graciously basking in a red carpet glow.

But when she addressed the congregation of voters, the 27-year-old PKR candidate battling Umno's Shahrizat Abdul Jalil for the Lembah Pantai seat assumed an air befitting a public servant.

At first, she delivered her remarks in a slow and even tempo. She announced to the residents of the lower-income area that, if voted into office, she would provide them with a housing allowance and raise the pay of hard-working police officers and government servants. She beseeched young people to stand up for their rights and vote for the opposition.

Intelligent arguments

Soon, however, the fiery tone characteristic of her father emerged.

"Why is it that the government still spends billions of ringgit on projects that don't benefit us? Why is this not brought up to Parliament?," she demanded. "This is what happens when 90 percent of its members are from one party.

lembah pantai parliamentary seat election results 110208"I have no problems with bringing issues to Parliament as I am not afraid of the BN government," she said.

Recognizing widespread concerns regarding crime and safety, she indicated that the community would be better off if police officers were dispatched to protect the residents and not sent to follow her on the campaign trail.

In response to her stream of alternating attacks and assurances, the multi-racial crowd nodded and cheered in agreement. Although she had come to speak with the residents of the lower-income flats in Kondo Rakyat, word of her visit had clearly inspired wealthier neighbours to make the trip downhill.

Older observers expressed surprise that such a young and outwardly innocuous woman could level such intelligent and defiant arguments at the government. Younger onlookers fawned over the winsome candidate, wanting to touch the glamorous aura about her.

Despite her age, Nurul Izzah promised the voters that she was prepared to take on BN stalwarts. The same spirit that enabled her to defend her father would help her fight for the interests of Lembah Pantai, she said.

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