

**Shahrizat : time for BN to do some 'soul-searching'**  
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In conceding defeat in the startling upset that skyrocketed 27-year-old Nurul Izzah Anwar into Parliament, outgoing Lembah Pantai MP Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said the ruling coalition BN must be responsible for the consequences of its actions and needed a period of renewal.  
MCPX

lembah pantai nomination day 240208 shahrizat "I accept the message that has been sent," she said. "Some issues should have been taken more seriously."

When pressed to expand on these "issues," the humbled politician demurred. Instead, she said that though she was saddened by her loss, "politicians never die."

"We have to do some soul-searching. (We) have to renew and re-energize ourselves," the three-term incumbent said. "Perhaps we need to go through this period."

On the eve of election day, ground reports and news stories indicated that the caretaker Minister of Women, Family and Community Development would defend her seat successfully.

Although PKR challenger Nurul Izzah seemed to be making headway among the wealthy, urbane voters in "Latte Lands" like Bangsar and lower-income voters in areas like Pantai Dalam, it was thought that Shahrizat's popularity and experience would trump Nurul Izzah's promise of change.

But in Saturday's elections, Nurul Izzah captured 21,728 votes to Shahrizat's 18,833. For Shahrizat, who defended her seat with a 15,288-vote majority in 2004, this was a bewildering and blistering blow.

### **Almost like Manhattan**

Despite the disappointments at the polls, barraged by reporters as she left Umno's headquarters late Saturday night, Shahrizat presented a dignified face and continued to emphasize a theme dominant in her campaign: Lembah Pantai's booming economy.

"During my tenure, Lembah Pantai has changed from a sleepy hollow to a beautiful, metropolitan part of the city," she said, adding that it was "almost like Manhattan".

"I'm very positive because no one can take away that during my 12 years, we have seen much growth."

However, while it is true that Shahrizat's reign saw the development of luxury condos and swank shopping centers, these pockets of wealth exist in stark contrast to the one-story flats occupied by many working class and low-income families in the area.

On the campaign trail, Shahrizat recruited business leaders like Air Asia CEO Tony Fernandes and CIMB Bank chief Nazir Razak to voice their support for her and remind voters of the prosperity she has brought to the area. She chose a central Bangsar corner lot as the

site of her operations centre and recruited entertainers like Erra Fazira and Siti Nurhaliza to perform for residents.

Nurul Izzah, however, chose a more modest location a few blocks away and campaigned on messages of anti-corruption, socio-economic equality and government accountability. Celebrities and CEOs were not part of her entourage.

Media reports leading up to polling day recognized that the Malay-majority constituency had traditionally supported Shahrizat but said that race-transcendent issues would complicate this year's elections.

Highlighting the economically-polarised electorate, these reports indicated that the victorious candidate would be able to adequately appeal to interests across the socio-economic spectrum. Given the results of the polls, Shahrizat has much to consider as she soul searches.

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