

'Pas must get closer to the people'

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KOTA BARU: The new Pas Muslimat or women's wing chief Nuridah Salleh, whose win on Thursday heralded a comeback for the party's conservatives, said Pas should be led by its ulama.

Nuridah, who scored a razor-thin victory over incumbent Azizah Khatib Mat in an election many have billed as a clash between the party's progressive Young Turks and its traditionalist old guard, said her desire to see a change in the wom-

en's movement encouraged her to contest for the post.

Azizah's defeat of Kalthum Othman in the previous election two years ago was part of a shuffle of senior positions favouring the reformers as they strove to remake the party in the wake of its drubbing in the 2004 general election.

"We need a new approach within the movement itself and also in our dealings with the community. We must double our efforts to get closer to

the people," said Nuridah, who is from Pekan, Pahang.

Nuridah, 46, who graduated from Universiti Malaya in 1986 with a degree in Ussuludin, demurred when asked if her win signalled a victory for the ulama but stressed her belief that the party should be helmed by the ulama.

Questioned whether she would turn the wing in a more conservative direction, however, the mother of 10 said she considered herself "modern".

The religious teacher at a private primary school in Selangor said one of her priorities would be to encourage more people, especially the youth, to register as voters.

Nuridah, who is the Federal Territory women's chief, defeated Azizah by five votes, while Selangor chief Wan Hasrina Wan Hassan defeated incumbent Dr Lo' Lo Ghazali by six votes at the party mukta-mar on Thursday. A total of 227 delegates voted.