

Dream team for PAS

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Delegates understand reality and challenges ahead

PAS leaders at the party *muktamar* had been making jokes about the *kebocoran* or leakage issue in Parliament.

But the joke was on them when, on the final day of the *muktamar*, they encountered some *kebocoran* in their very midst.

The party's election results, which was to be revealed only yesterday, had leaked by Saturday evening and every newspaper published the outcome of the main contests.

The PAS' election committee is one of the most secretive bodies in the party and its members were understandably quite upset.

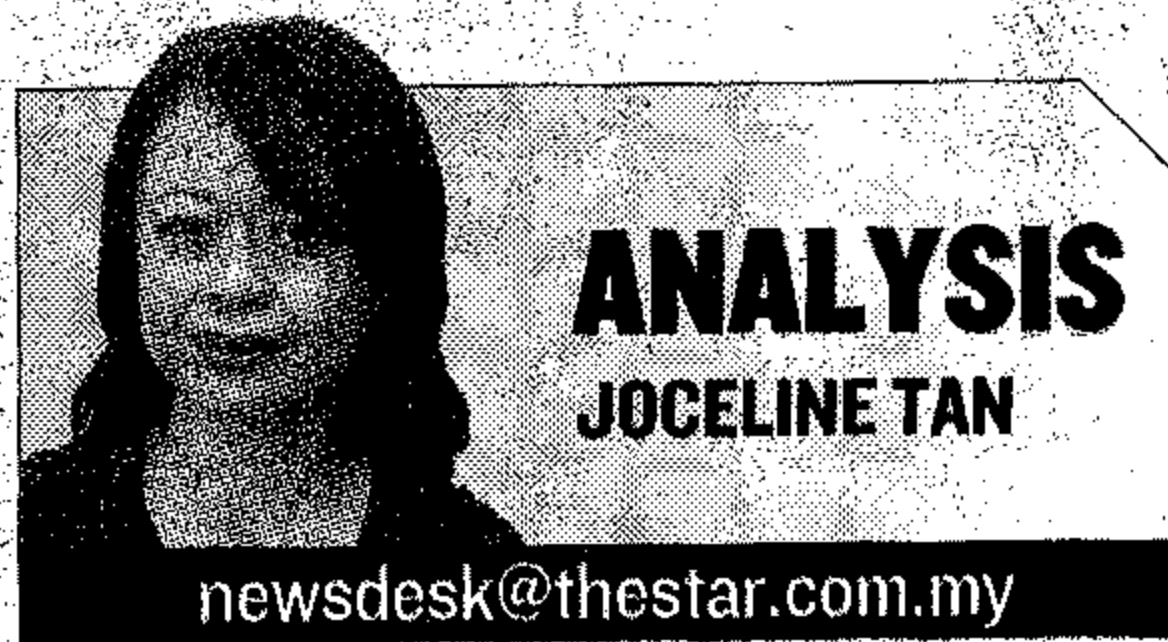
The same thing happened in the last party polls but not every newspaper got it right. This time, the leak, so to speak, was spot on.

But the party leadership had no complaints about the election result itself.

Some at the *muktamar* even alluded to it as the "dream team" for PAS.

It had an interesting mix of *ulama* figures, technocratic professionals and grassroots activists.

The younger leaders who came in with the winds of change in the last party polls had been under pressure from the old guards and their supporters. But the delegates obviously thought they were as important to the party as the traditional *ulama* who used to form the party's back-



bone.

"The delegates know what is good for the party. They understand the reality and challenges ahead and the new team is a reflection of their maturity," said newly-elected central committee member Datuk Takiyuddin Hassan.

Nasaruddin Mat Isa retained his deputy president post against Datuk Harun Taib by a decisive 207-vote majority.

The 45-year-old Nasruddin must have felt like he was sitting on a hot stove the last few days, but the win has confirmed him as the rightful man for the job.

His win also showed that although the delegates respected Harun, they did not believe the contest was warranted. Nasruddin had been on the job for only two years and that was not a fair period of time to judge him.

The combination of people who won the three vice-president posts and the 18 central committee seats was a reflection of how far PAS had

»The combination of people who won the VP posts and the 18 central committee seats is a reflection of how far PAS has come from its *sekolah pondok* roots«

come from its *sekolah pondok* or village religious school roots.

Datuk Husam Musa led the vice-presidents line-up with an astonishing 831 votes from the 947 delegates. His two fellow VPs Mohamed Sabu and Ahmad Awang trailed with 666 and 427 votes respectively.

The Universiti Malaya trained economist has impressed party people from his days as an MP and now as a Kelantan exco member.

Husam's political success will give Kelantan Mentri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat even greater reason to name him as a possible successor.

Nik Aziz and Datuk Seri Hadi Awang have been very supportive of the younger leadership.

The two elderly *ulama* have had hands-on experience in running a state. They know that religiosity and prayer alone cannot help them with the complexities of running a state.

They need the technocratic skills and knowledge of the younger professional. Hence, their support for the group's energy and intellect.

The contest, especially for the No

2 post, was a clear reflection of the differences in ideas and approaches between the old guards and younger leaders. It is not going to dissipate just because there is now a "dream team" in place.

"The rift is there but it is not serious," said a young professional.

All the leaders in their winding-up speeches took pains to assure party members that the *ulama* leadership would work together with the young professionals.

The new Dewan Ulama head Mohamed Daud, better known as Mat Iraq, impressed his audience with his down-to-earth understanding of the various interest groups in the party.

It convinced many in the audience that he was a worthy successor to Harun in the Dewan Ulama.

The last party polls were about renewal and bringing in new people to help the party recover lost ground in the 2004 general election.

This weekend's election confirmed that team which will lead the party into the next general election.