

'No nepotism involved'

PM says his daughter's win reflects wishes of party grassroots

JOHOR BARU: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has described claims of nepotism following his daughter's successful outing at PKR's recent party polls as unfair to him and the party.

The Prime Minister and PKR president said Nurul Izzah's election as deputy president reflects the wishes of the party grassroots.

"Back (in 1998) when I was hours away from being arrested by the police to be thrown in jail, I had no choice but to choose (Datuk Seri Wan) Azizah (Wan Ismail) to replace me.

"She did not even know how long she had to shoulder that responsibility. But there were no claims of nepotism then," he said during his winding-up address at the PKR national congress.

"But why is there an issue now? Yes, I chose Wan Azizah out of desperation but Nurul Izzah was elected (as deputy president) by party members."

Nurul Izzah won the deputy president race with 9,803 votes, over the incumbent, Economy Minister Datuk Seri Rafizi Ramli, who received 3,866 votes.

The Prime Minister also made special mention of Wan Azizah, noting her contributions to the party.

"I better thank her before everyone else or else she will say I forgot about her," he quipped, to which the audience applauded.

Now that the party polls have ended, Anwar said it is time for healing.

He said continued efforts must be made to reform the party, which represents all races in the country.

Expressing his confidence in



United front: Anwar (middle, front) standing with newly elected party office bearers as they sing the party's anthem during PKR national congress in Johor Baru. — THOMAS YONG/The Star

the new line-up, he reminded PKR leaders to not forget their roots and remain committed to reform and not just chase after positions or material.

He said it was important to carry out an "idealism polishing" from time to time to uphold the party's integrity, adding that internal reforms should cover selection, discipline, values and evaluation of office bearers for various government and GLC positions.

Although Rafizi and former vice-president Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad were not present on the second day of the congress,

Anwar paid tribute and said their sacrifices cannot be forgotten.

On the party elections, he said the results reflected delegates' rejection of the "cai" method (preferred candidates' line-up).

As for the upcoming Sabah state election, Anwar, who is also Pakatan Harapan chairman, assured the party that he will obtain a reasonable number of seats to contest.

He said a special meeting will be held on May 29 to discuss seat allocations for the upcoming polls.

"I have discussed the matter

with Barisan Nasional and Umno chairman Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Gabungan Rakyat Sabah chairman Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor on working together.

"After the Asean summit ends, the special meeting will be held and I give my assurance that PKR and Pakatan will get a reasonable number of seats," he added.