

**Azalina: Pakatan donning environmentalist hats to woo Johor vote**  
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**By Clara Chooi and Mohd Farhan Darwis**

PENGERANG, Sept 30 — Pengerang MP Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said has dismissed today's rally against Petronas' RM60 billion petrochemical investment here as a ploy by Pakatan Rakyat (PR) to woo electoral support by masquerading as environmentalists.

Labelling PR leaders "insincere", the former youth and sports minister told The Malaysian Insider that the federal opposition's sudden concern for Pengerang constituents would likely fizzle out after the coming polls.

She said PR wanted to "turn this into a second Lynas", referring to the string of opposition-backed protests in Kuantan, Pahang, against the multimillion ringgit rare earth refinery in Gebeng Industrial Park by Australian mining firm Lynas Corporation.

Residents living near the Lynas Advanced Materials Plant (LAMP) site in Gebeng had raised concerns over the possibility of radioactive residues from the plant posing safety and health risks, and have been lobbying for the project to be scrapped despite federal approval.

"Pakatan just wants to rally up support for themselves and their actions will create a negative perception of our country.

"This (today's) protest is on the pretext of being environmental in nature but its objectives are to help the opposition," she said when contacted here.

Thousands of green-clad protesters from various local and national NGOs, including the Himpunan Hijau group from Kuantan, will be descending on the small township of Kampung Sungai Rengit in Pengerang today to protest the Petronas Refinery and Petrochemicals Development (RAPID) project.

RAPID is part of the Pengerang Integrated Petroleum Complex (PIPC) occupying a majority of the small constituency on the southernmost tip of Johor, which is expected to turn Malaysia into a mega petrochemical hub.

Thousands of residents in seven villages affected by RAPID have already been notified of their impending evacuation after the government invoked Section 8 of the Land Acquisition Act.

But many are said to be unhappy with the compensation deal offered to them in exchange for their evacuation from the coastal township where they have stayed for over three generations now.

"I am sure the local folk here aren't so foolish.

"The matter of greatest concern here is about the land. And the government had never forced them out," Azalina said.

"There are many issues of concern here in Johor. This RAPID issue is just one of the opposition's weapon to try and weaken us."

Since yesterday, protestors from across 25 locations nationwide had begun streaming into Kampung Sungai Rengit, located at the southernmost tip of Johor here, turning the quiet coastal township into a hive of activity ahead of this morning's protest.

When met yesterday, organisers told The Malaysian Insider that they have already run afoul the authorities as both the local council and the police have refused to give their go-ahead for the mass rally.

Three roadblocks are expected to be erected to block the single carriageway into Kampung Sungai Rengit, but event coordinator Zaaba Abdul Samad said the authorities "may be able to stop the vehicles but not the people".

The outspoken activist added that the Pengerang issue would likely be Umno's sore point, even affecting its chances of recapturing the parliamentary seat in the coming polls.

He pointed out that during the previous two elections in 2004 and 2008, Azalina had cruised to easy walkover victories as the opposition had trouble with its candidates.

"But this time, we will 'lawan tetap lawan' (fight to the end)," he said.

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