

**Lembah Pantai tough for BN due to split Malay vote, Nong Chik says**  
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**By Md Izwan**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 28 — The Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition will have a tough time winning back the Lembah Pantai parliamentary seat, Umno's Datuk Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin said today while blaming it on attempts by "certain" political parties to divide the Malay-Muslim vote.

The Malay-Muslim community forms roughly 60 per cent of Malaysia's population and is split three-ways between the country's biggest Malay party, Umno, Islamist opposition party PAS, and PKR, seen as an urban liberal party.

Political parties have sparred over issues such as the implementation of hudud laws — the Islamic penal code — in an attempt to gain support from the Malay community ahead of the 13th general election.

"[It] cannot be denied the Umno-BN machinery will face fierce competition in the general election here. But I feel there is a bright chance to win.

"[The] barrier (halangan) to [a BN victory] arises from certain parties in the country that try to split the Muslims in the country," Raja Nong Chik said after attending a Hari Raya Aidiladha celebration at Pantai Baru this morning.

Raja Nong Chik, who is seen as a likely candidate from Umno for the parliamentary seat, said that preparations have already been made and the party machinery is impatiently waiting for the prime minister's green light.

In Election 2008, Umno Wanita chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil failed to defend the Lembah Pantai hot seat, suffering a surprise defeat to Nurul Izzah Anwar, the daughter of Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Nurul Izzah won the seat with 21,728 votes while Shahrizat and an independent candidate received 18,833 votes and 489 votes, respectively.

Earlier this month, Shahrizat had openly declared her support for Raja Nong Chik to be the Umno candidate for the Lembah Pantai seat in the coming election.

Shahrizat had said that none was more qualified than Raja Nong Chik, who is also an Umno Supreme Council member, saying that he had worked hard in the Lembah Pantai area.

"Actually, I've supported Datuk Raja Nong Chik since three years ago but only today I'm declaring it," said the former minister whose family has been linked to the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal.

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