

Lembah Pantai: PKR raps govt over social problems at low-cost flats

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Lembah Pantai constituency is one of the most diverse in Malaysia, home to both the affluent and highly-educated group and also low-income residents, many staying in public housing projects.

The class division can be seen when you look at the low-cost flats in Pantai Dalam adjacent to the high-end Bangsar South development.

With such a diverse spectrum of voters, the MP needs to strike a balance and appeal to both groups.



Nurul Izzah sharing a joke with traders during her walkabout.

The Lembah Pantai parliamentary seat was won by Nurul Izzah Anwar with a majority of only 1,847 votes in the last general election. There are 75,000 voters in this constituency.



Fahmi Fadzil says Putrajaya needs to admit they made a mistake in the design of low-cost flats.

It is speculated that PKR communications director Fahmi Fadzil will be Pakatan Harapan's (PH) candidate in the 14th general election (GE14).

Fahmi, a 37-year-old chemical engineer, said the seat was almost a representation of the rest of the country as "we have the most affluent society and, at the same time, there are also a lot of poor people in need of assistance".

He said the Pantai Dalam low-cost flats are plagued with drug problems and many residents are in need of government assistance.

For instance, he said, about 20% of Seri Pantai flat residents are depending on government welfare.

"But the residents here want more than that. They want to get out of poverty.

"They want better homes that they can connect to. They want their children to study.

"They want their children to be just like the rest of the people in Bangsar," he said after an almost three-hour walkabout with Nurul Izzah at the Pasar Tani in Pantai Permai here.

Others who turned up were Amanah's deputy chief Faiz Fadzil and several PPBM members.

During the walkabout, a lot of traders were seen chatting with Nurul Izzah while others shook hands with her.

There are five low-cost flats in Pantai Dalam – Kampung Limau, Seri Pantai, Seri Cempaka, Pantai Ria and Kerinchi.

Mistake in design of low-cost flats

Fahmi said the government needed to admit that it made a mistake in the design of the low-cost flats which contributed to the poor living conditions.

He said each unit averaged about 56 sq m and consisted of two rooms, with a tiny living area and kitchen.

“Too many people are cramped into one unit. There are sometimes up to nine people in a unit,” he said.

Fahmi said the flats were also not well maintained, with faulty lifts causing hardship to the disabled and senior citizens.

He promised to get in touch with top architects in Malaysia for ideas on how to replace the flats with units which would instil a sense of community if PH were to take over Putrajaya after GE14.

“The best way is to have a day where all the architects get together and come up with plans to replace these units.”

He said the top architects could do this as part of community building.

Mixed voters await GE14

During the walkabout, FMT spoke to some residents in the area.



Vegetable trader Ismail Othman says prices of some vegetables have gone up by almost 25% since 2015.

Vegetable trader Ismail Othman, 58, said prices of vegetables had gone up by more than 25% and said suppliers blamed the goods and services tax (GST), implemented in 2015, for this.

He said in the first year of GST, prices went up by 10% and in three years, the prices of some of the vegetables had increased by 25%.

“My customers complained that the prices of my vegetables have gone up. But I get my supply from Selayang (wholesale market). Their prices have gone up a lot too.”

Another resident, who wanted to be known as Wan Ali, said he would vote for change.

“I am a government servant. But there has to be a change. GST is causing hardship. Cost of living has gone up.

“I am taxed GST even if I buy secondhand spare parts for my car.

“I hope (PH prime ministerial candidate) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) will look at reducing the cost of living.”

He said although the government was giving BR1M handouts (cash aid) to the poor, it was almost like “they take RM100 from us and give back RM5”.

Another civil servant, who wished to be identified as Nor Asma, said she would support PAS.

She wants the Islamist party to help reduce toll nationwide and slow down rapid development in the Kerinchi area.

She said the rapid development in Kerinchi, with high-rise office blocks, had caused massive traffic congestion in the area.



Cikgu Zainuddin says Nurul Izzah is seldom seen visiting her constituents.

Meanwhile, an Umno supporter, who wanted to be known as Cikgu Zainuddin, said he was disappointed with the incumbent, Nurul Izzah.

The 83-year-old said the MP was seldom seen visiting the people in the area, except now with the election drawing closer.

“PH has failed to look after the welfare of the people, especially the traders,” he said.

Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin, who lost to Nurul Izzah in the 2013 general election, is expected to contest again on behalf of BN in GE14.

Analysts have predicted that the seat could go either way due to the redelineation exercise as the Bukit Aman area might be included in the Lembah Pantai constituency.

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