

Nazri: FLOM title is unofficial, yet legitimate
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Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nazri Abdul Aziz told the Dewan Rakyat today that the 'First Lady' title used by the premier's wife is a legitimate title, albeit unofficial.

"The term is an unofficial title which has no basis in legal provisions but (is based) purely on convention and accepted international practice," Nazri (left) said during Question time this morning.

"In the Malaysian context, it refers to the wife of the prime minister. It is an old practice in international politics."

He was replying Johari Abdul (PKR-Sungai Petani) who had asked whether the federal government recognises the premier's wife or the queen as the nation's 'First Lady'.

"The First Lady is the wife of the chief executive of the country, which is the wife of the PM. So as in the UK previously when Tony Blair was PM, then Cherie Blair his wife was First Lady.

In Japan, they have the emperor and empress but the First Lady is the wife of the PM. (This is similar to the situation) here."

He also told off the opposition for frequently turning the issue into a political matter.

"There is no need for confusion on this in terms of the law," stressed the minister, who has frequently been questioned on the topic.

'Opposition don't know protocol'

To a supplementary question from P Kamalanathan (BN-Hulu Selangor), who asked why the opposition is particularly interested on the matter, Nazri said the opposition is ignorant of government protocol.

"It's okay that they ask. They don't understand as they have never been in the federal government," he said.

The 'First Lady' controversy was first raised after it was realised that the Prime Minister's Office website had listed a 'F.L.O.M. division' along with contact details of several aides.

This directory listing was taken down after a ruckus was raised by netizens, who argued that the First Lady is rightfully the Raja Permaisuri Agong.

Last Wednesday, in response to a question in the Dewan Rakyat, Nazri said the listing had been removed to avoid "confusion".

He explained that the six staff-members listed are indeed assigned to assist Rosmah Mansor, the wife of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, but are not working exclusively for her.

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