

## **PM taking women's portfolio 'regressive', says PKR**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's decision to take over the portfolio of the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry reflects poorly on the premier's intention to improve women's participation in government, said PKR Wanita chief Zuraida Kamaruddin.

NONE In a statement today, Zuraida (left) described the move as "an insult to women" and a regressive move for women in Malaysia.

"We talk about 30 percent participation (for women in government) but we are not able to field a women (minister) for the very ministry that should set the example," she said.

Yesterday, Najib said outgoing Women, Family, and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil will not have a new replacement but the premier will instead serve as its acting minister.

Shahrizat whose family is embroiled in the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) scandal had announced that she will relinquish the position after her senatorship expires today.

However, she will retain her position within Umno as the Wanita wing's chief.

NONE Three other senators, Ministers in the Prime Minister's Department Koh Tsu Koon (right) and Jamil Khir Baharom as well as Deputy Finance Minister Awang Adek, will have their tenureship extended in the Dewan Negara and continuing serving the government.

Najib's announcement has quashed speculation that Shahrizat's replacement in the Dewan Negara, Selangor Umno Wanita chief Raja Ropiah Raja Abdullah, will also take over Shahrizat's ministerial post. She is expected to be sworn in today.

Ropiah, who is a Wanita exco member, is one of several vocal supporters of Shahrizat.

Embattled Wanita chief Shahrizat had received calls from within the wing - in particular from deputy Wanita chief Kamilia Ibrahim - to step down over the NFC fiasco involving the alleged abuse of a RM250 million government loan by her family.

Betrayal of women's agenda

Meanwhile DAP Wanita chairperson Chong Eng said that it was disappointing that the premier had taken over the Women, Family and Community Development portfolio.

She said in a statement the PM also holds the finance ministership, and questioned if he could handle the additional responsibilities.

"This only demonstrates the lack of seriousness of BN towards women empowerment at a time when we are facing stagnated development in terms of gender equality."

NONE The MP for Bukit Mertajam also said Najib himself was robbing women leaders within the government of one out of only two posts in the cabinet.

"Najib only had two women among 30 ministers. Now there is only one left. Is BN devoid of quality women leaders able to take over the position?"

"Or is Najib being insensitive to women in general by denying them a rightful opportunity to hold a

leadership position?"

Chong Eng (left) said Najib's government was obviously taking the women's agenda very lightly and they would punish BN in the next election because of this betrayal.

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