

Capability more important than gender: PM tells Cuepacs
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Najib Abdul Razak said the capability of the civil service to implement and fulfill the expectation of the government and people is more important than the concern of certain groups on the increasing domination of women in the service.

The prime minister said he would not be surprised if women formed the bigger group in terms of new entries into the administrative and diplomatic service (PTD) in the near future, if the trend of more women entering the universities continued.

"The question of gender is not important, of utmost importance is the output and achievement of the civil service," he told a media conference at the conclusion of his two-day official visit to Sarawak in Sibul today.

Earlier, Najib and his wife Rosmah Mansor attended a luncheon in conjunction with the Chinese New Year together with the Chinese community in Sibul.

He was asked to comment on the statement by the secretary-general of the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) Ahmad Shah Mohd Zin yesterday that the current trend of more women being appointed into senior posts had long-term implications in the development aspects and national growth.

Ahmad Shah contended that this was in contradiction to the current policy of the government which provided for only 30 per cent of the decision-making posts to women.

However, Najib said there would certainly be more women applicants because on the average 65 per cent of those entering the universities were women, while those applying to join the PTD must have at least the first degree.

Meanwhile in Muar, Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said the women's dominance in the civil service currently should not be disputed as it was based on capability and merit.

He said the government's policy of allocating only 30 per cent of the posts of policy makers to women was merely a guideline.

"Whatever that occurs in the establishment, the decision is based on merit.

"If a particular woman is capable and based on merit, then she is eligible to be there. We cannot dispute it," he said.

Muhyiddin, who is also the minister of education, said this to reporters after witnessing a Robotec demonstration by school students in the Pagoh parliamentary constituency at the Dewan Kompleks Seri Pekembar, in Pagoh, today.

Muhyiddin conceded that in the Education Ministry currently there were more women teachers compared to male teachers.

He said the phenomenon of a higher number of women holding senior positions was worldwide. "This is a global phenomenon," he said.

- *Bernama*

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