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Stepping down

> Shahrizat to resign as minister, but to remain
Wanita Umno and BN Wanita chief

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PETALING JAYA: Embattled Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil announced yesterday she will step down as a minister when her senatorship ends on April 8.

She made it clear, however, that she would remain as Wanita Umno and Barisan Nasional Wanita chief.

"I have been thinking about this for a long time, I want to do the right thing, and I feel for me now the right thing is to leave my post as a cabinet minister, the time has come ..." a calm-looking Shahrizat told a press conference after her ministerial function at Desa Waterpark.

"I want to stress I made the decision on my own. I love this nation and have the greatest respect for the government and the prime minister," said Shahrizat, adding that she would send her letter to Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak the same night (last night).

Shahrizat had recently said she would leave it to Najib whether to reappoint her as senator when her term expires in April.

Asked if her resignation was due

to her being implicated in the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) controversy, Shahrizat reiterated she had nothing to do with it.

"I want to say one thing very clearly, whether there is a conflict of interest ... I have nothing to do with NFCorp. It is just that I am married to the chairman of NFCorp.

"But being a responsible member of the government, I feel the right thing for me to do is to step down graciously," she said, adding that as a leader, wife and a mother, she knows what to do.



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- Datuk Seri Shahrizat

Various quarters had called for Shahrizat's resignation over her alleged links to the NFCorp controversy, as her husband, Datuk Dr Mohamed Salleh Ismail, heads the company which is involved in managing the National Feedlot Centre cattle-rearing project in Negri Sembilan.

After the 2010 Auditor-General's Report cited "weaknesses" in its

management, the Opposition had raised various allegations of abuse of a RM250 million soft loan given to the company.

Shahrizat said yesterday she wants the investigations into the NFCorp controversy to carry on in accordance with the law and will await its outcome.

She said her final priority, as a minister is to ensure the passing and enforcement of the Social Workers Act, adding that serving the targeted groups under the ministry had been a joyful journey for her and had "brought meaning to my life".

Asked if she will stand in the next general election, Shahrizat merely smiled and said: "We don't know what tomorrow will bring."

In PEKAN, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak welcomed Shahrizat's decision, saying it is appropriate and correct. He said the resignation was perceived as a sacrifice in the interest of the government and party,

Bernama reports.

"Although there is no proof so far that she had committed any offence in terms of law, because the NFCorp issue has drawn controversy and dispute, she was willing to withdraw from the government," he told reporters before attending a *tahlil* prayer for the late Tun Abdul Razak at Masjid Sultan Ahmad Shah yesterday.