

No longer senior adviser to the PM

Nurul Izzah steps down from economics and finance post she held for six weeks

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PETALING JAYA: Nurul Izzah Anwar is no longer the senior adviser on economics and finance to the Prime Minister, a post which she held for just about six weeks.

Instead, she will co-head a secretariat that will support the Finance Ministry's advisory panel.

"The chair of the Advisory Committee to the Finance Minister, Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Marican, together with the other esteemed members, have invited me to co-head the secretariat to support their work for the nation.

"It is an invitation that I humbly accept," she said in a statement, adding that she looked forward to assisting Mohd Hassan and the other committee members in serving the nation.

Prior to this, her Jan 3 appointment as senior adviser to her father Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had drawn much flak with critics saying that it was nepotism.

In her statement yesterday, the former Permatang Pauh MP said

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Mohd Hassan said Nurul Izzah has been invited to co-head a secretariat that supports the operations of the committee.

"A secretariat to support the operations of the Advisory Committee has been formed and is located at

the Petronas Twin Towers," he said in a statement yesterday.

Mohd Hassan, in his capacity as the chairman of the Advisory Committee, had invited Nurul Izzah to co-head the secretariat together with PETRONAS senior manager Khairil Anuar Ramli.

The Advisory Committee reports directly to the Finance Minister. It will meet as frequently as possible depending on the need.

The committee advises the Finance Minister on matters related to subsidies, including reviewing and restructuring existing subsidies, and the provision of more holistic social protection, matters related to government-linked companies (GLCs), including determining their relevance in the current context and consolidating them where appropriate, as well as national debt and good governance.

The committee held its first meeting chaired by Mohd Hassan on Friday.

Commenting on the development, Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) president Dr Muhammad Mohan said Nurul Izzah's decision to relinquish her post as senior adviser on economics and finance to the Prime Minister was commendable.

"This recalibration will put an end to being accused of nepotism due to the 'father and daughter relationship'," he said.

He said Nurul Izzah had demonstrated in the past her high standard of integrity and firmness in dealing with issues.

"It is our hope that she and all

other advisers and the Prime Minister are given the support by all Malaysians to move this nation to greater heights," he added.

He welcomed her new role as the co-head of the secretariat.

"This is precisely what TI-Malaysia also suggested when we said a 'recalibration' is necessary as Nurul's role and contribution in the government is highly welcomed but there must not be any conflict of interest," he added.

Muhammad previously said Nurul Izzah's appointment as senior adviser to the Prime Minister would have a bearing on Malaysia's standing in the Corruption Perception Index.

Centre for Market Education (CME) chief executive officer, Dr Carmelo Ferlito said the latest development appeared to be "more like an attempt to put a patch on the hole".

CME had previously criticised Nurul Izzah's appointment as senior adviser, saying that it contradicted the reformist policies adopted by Anwar and his unity government.