

**Despite scandal, Shahrizat says Wanita will lead Umno to victory**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 1 — Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, currently at the centre of an ongoing political scandal, declared today that it will be the women's wing she heads that will lead Umno to victory in the coming polls.

This, she claimed, was because Wanita Umno possesses the traits of true "Umno members" that her party president Datuk Seri Najib Razak had earlier preached during his opening address at the party's general assembly.

"These traits that he (Najib) seeks, we see them in the heart of Wanita Umno.

"He said we must be obedient, Wanita is obedient. Loyal, Wanita is loyal. Be caring... indeed, that is Wanita's instinct. Serve, fight, sacrifice... all that, I see in the heart of Wanita Umno and insya-Allah, it will be Wanita Umno that will lead (Umno) to strength and victory in the 13th general election," she told a brief press conference after Najib's speech.

Shahrizat, beaming and animated as she spoke, was flanked by a large group of supporters from the wing who nudged and whispered to her as she addressed the media.

When a reporter loudly asked if she had been involved in awarding the RM250 million federally-funded cattle project to her husband's company, Shahrizat merely kept silent, her smile never leaving her face.

Beside her, one delegate muttered, "Tak payahlah (no need)".

Shahrizat then paused to speak to her entourage, before proceeding with her monologue.

"Okay, I would like to urge all Wanita Umno members, the 1.3 million members nationwide, to accept Yang Amat Berhormat (Najib's) challenge to become the backbone to the grassroots... Spread the message that if we do not win the election, our race and religion will be destroyed," she said.

"Remember, Wanita Umno, the burden of returning honour to your race, religion and country rests on your shoulders," she added.

Shahrizat and her family have been beset by claims of abuse and corruption over their involvement in the NFC cattle project, which was first cast into the spotlight when the Auditor-General's Report for 2010 described it as "a mess".

The senior Cabinet minister is yet to explain the issue and, despite promising to address it during the assembly, only chose to say over the past two days that she had nothing to do with it.

She also moved yesterday to attack Pakatan Rakyat (PR) for harping on the issue and called for the resignation of Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, PKR's president.

Her wing members and Umno Youth have declared they are solidly behind Shahrizat despite

the scandal.

Asked again today to speak on the NFC, Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin said: "I haven't had the chance to speak with her (Shahrizat)."

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