

Shahrizat sacrificed herself, says Najib
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, March 11 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak commended Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil today for her decision to sacrifice herself and quit the Cabinet for the sake of the government and Umno.

The prime minister told reporters in Pekan this evening Shahrizat's move to relinquish her women, family and community development portfolio when her senatorship ends on April 8 was the appropriate and right thing to do.

He said he appreciated the sacrifice made by Shahrizat and was thankful for her decision.

"Although there is no proof so far that she had committed any offence, because the NFC issue has drawn controversy and dispute, she was willing to withdraw from the government," he told reporters, referring to the National Feedlot Centre.

Shahrizat had said earlier today she will resign as women, family and community minister next month but stay on as Wanita Umno chief after being dogged for over four-and-a-half months by the NFC scandal.

The former Lembah Pantai MP and her family were accused by the opposition of using a RM250 million federal loan meant for the project to pay for land, property and expenses unrelated to cattle farming.

The cattle-rearing company is headed by her husband, Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail, and their three children.

It was tapped to run the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) in Gemas, Negeri Sembilan in 2006, when Shahrizat was in Cabinet.

The former Lembah Pantai MP previously resisted calls from within her own party, including by influential former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to quit, stressing that she was "only the wife" of Salleh and had nothing to do with the embattled entity.

NFCorp hit the national headlines after it made it into the Auditor-General's Report last year for missing production targets.

Police recommended last month that the Attorney-General (A-G) charge NFCorp's directors for criminal breach of trust, but the A-G has asked the police to conduct further investigations.

Shahrizat was appointed as women, community and family minister in 2001 and held the post until 2008, when she lost in the general election.

She was then appointed special advisor to the prime minister on women affairs and social

development, before being reassuming her Cabinet portfolio a year later.

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