

**Shahrizat pooh-poohs Pakatan's agenda for women**  
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**By Hafidz Baharom and Roznah AJ**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 17 — Even as Pakatan Rakyat (PR) moves in to tackle Umno's traditional support from women voters, the ruling party's wing chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil today chose to scoff at her competition, saying the opposition pact was only reacting after realising that women make up half the electorate.

The former minister for women affairs said PR was late in the game as the pact's "Agenda Wanita Malaysia", which was launched last week, contained initiatives that were long ago implemented by the Barisan Nasional (BN) government.

"I was thoroughly amused when they launched the Agenda Wanita Malaysia, listing out all sorts of changes because the causes have long been championed by the BN government," Shahrizat (picture) told reporters this morning at a function here.

She added that she was "even more amused" that Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had purportedly assumed the role of PR's women chief for launching the agenda.

"So now women will head out and ask, is Anwar the head of their women too?" said Shahrizat, who had stepped down from her ministerial post earlier this year following heavy criticism against her alleged link to the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has since assumed Shahrizat's role as women, family and community development minister.

Malay-language daily Berita Harian reported today that the Umno leader had cited also her self-established "Skuad Sayang" as an example of how her party has recognised and protected the role and power of women in society.

"The idea for Agenda Wanita Malaysia was triggered only after the opposition realised that there are 50 per cent women voters," she was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

In launching Agenda Wanita Malaysia last week, Anwar urged PR's women wings to widen support in rural areas which are a stronghold of the ruling BN government.

The PR's women agenda contains seven key focus areas which would include changes in government and education policies that can only be carried out if the pact forms the federal government.

The Malaysian Insider had reported last month that women's votes, once considered a certainty for Umno-BN, would be targeted by PR for the upcoming general election which must be called by April next year.

The next national polls is being seen as the closest one in history, with more than 12 million voters registered to date deciding the next federal government.

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