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## Female ministers short of 30 per cent minimum

MONDAY, MAY 20, 2013 - 14:40

by Faizal Nor Izham (/source/faizal-nor-izham)

Location:

PETALING JAYA

**WOMEN'S** groups are unsatisfied with the number of female representatives in the newly-formed Cabinet.

A statement from the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) said the appointments fell short of the government's target of women comprising at least 30 per cent of decision-making positions.

There are only two women ministers and five deputy ministers out of a total of 59 positions.

In the previous Cabinet, there were two women among 29 ministers, and eight among the 40 deputy ministers.

JAG comprises the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO), All Women's Action Society (Awam), Sisters in Islam (SIS), Perak Women for Women Society (PWW), Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (Empower), Women's Centre for Change (WCC) and the Sabah Women's Action Resource Group (Sawo).

"While we congratulate the seven, having only two in 35 full ministerial positions is disappointing," JAG said.

"In all three of Datuk Seri Najib Razak's Cabinets, only two women were ministers, with this number briefly dropping to one when he appointed himself women, family, and community development minister."

The percentage has also decreased. While the number of posts increased from 32 in 2008 to 35 this year, the number of women ministers remains at two.

"In its manifesto, the Barisan Nasional pledged to increase women participation in decision-making at the national level," JAG said.

"The importance of appointing more women leaders cannot be underestimated, as it will acquaint voters to them.

"In 1993, an amendment to India's constitution mandated that one of three village council heads be reserved for females. Studies found these villages were more likely to elect women heads in future unreserved elections compared to villages that never did."

The statement said having more women as ministers ensured that the diversity of issues was not sidelined.

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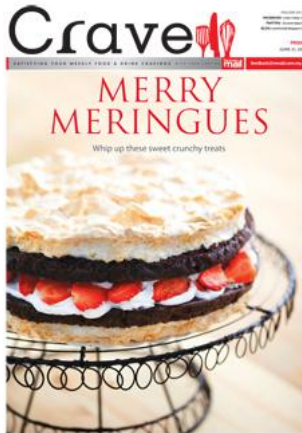
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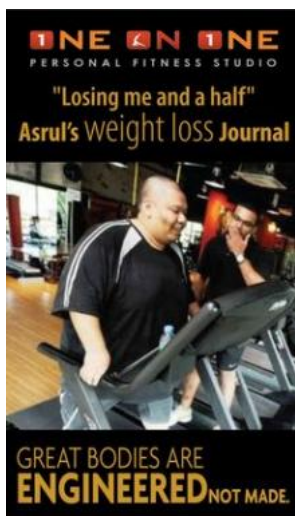
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