

## ■ FAMILY TIES

# Lawsuit is sign of a dark era for family unit

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The family institution can crack if ties are not sturdy.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said this yesterday when asked to comment on the recent case of an 85-year-old retiree from Selangor who sued his three sons for forcing him to sign a statutory declaration allowing them to claim two plots of land in Batu Caves.

"We view the matter seriously. There has never been a case where a father sued his son or daughter. This shows that the family environment has changed.

"It would be unfair to blame only one party in this case. It is the responsibility of parents to inculcate good values and educate their children.

"In return, children should take care of their parents, especially during their old age. There must be a two-way relationship.

"We can't stop the father from suing his sons. As long as he abides by the law, he has the right to pursue legal action," she said after officiating at the opening of the "South East Asian Conference on Ageing: Improving Well Being in Later Life" yesterday.

The two-day conference was organised by the Universiti Putra



Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil (right) launching the conference. With her are (from left) UPM Vice-Chancellor Tan Sri Dr Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah, United Nations-Malta International Institute on Ageing director Prof Dr Joseph Troisi and United Nations Population Fund assistant representative for Malaysia Yeoh Yeok Kim.

Malaysia Institute of Gerontology and the International Institute on Ageing, United Nations-Malta. Sixteen foreign delegates attended the conference.

In her speech, Shahrizat said Malaysia was experiencing rapid

population aging.

At present, the older population, aged 60 years and more, stands at 2.2 million, making up 7.8 per cent of the total population for this year.

"Population aging is the result of

successful national development plans within the region. The challenge that come with population aging is chronic poverty among the aged. It is a global concern.

"A lifespan approach must be adopted to ensure the wellbeing of

our society, especially for those in later life," she said.

"The ministry has placed several policies and programmes, based on the lifespan approach, to achieve well being and will be revising the policy on aging soon."