

Isa ineligible to head Felda co-op?

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By Joseph Sipalan

The recent appointment of Isa Samad as head of the Felda Settlers' Cooperative (KPF, by its Malay acronym) is 'illegal' as he is not even eligible for membership in the society, PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution says.

NONECiting sources within the national plantation giant, Saifuddin (left), said the KPF board of directors had approved Isa's inclusion in the board without taking into account the rules and regulations governing cooperatives.

He said the KPF management is unhappy with the arbitrary appointment and has sought the advice of the Malaysian Cooperatives Commission (SKM) on the matter.

"It (SKM) stated that any appointment to the board of any cooperative is subject to provisions under the Cooperatives Act 1993 and the by-laws," Saifuddin told Malaysiakini.

"Since the Act and the by-laws state that only (cooperative) members who have been in (the society) for two years qualify as board members, his appointment is also subject to this provision."

isa samad and felda 031204It is understood that an application to place Isa - who is also Felda chairperson - on the KPF board and to make him the cooperative's chairperson was approved at a special board meeting on June 22.

This allegedly created confusion as, despite the board's decision, Felda general manager and the previous KPF chairperson, Zukifli Wahab, chaired a board meeting on Sept 8 to discuss his replacement by Isa.

This came despite the absence of clear indication as to whether Isa's appointment had indeed taken effect.

Bigger conspiracy?

Pro-Felda settlers' NGO Anak believes that Isa's appointment as KPF chairperson was done with bigger plans in mind, which is to support the government's plan to list Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGVH) on Bursa Malaysia next year.

NONEAnak chairperson Mazlan Aliman (left) said KPF holds a 51 percent stake, worth some RM350 million, in Felda Holdings Sdn Bhd, which is slated to be used to prop up FGVH's attempt to list on the stock exchange.

Mazlan claimed further that Isa had put up some 367,000ha of plantation land as a guarantee to raise funds for FGVH's impending foray into Bursa Malaysia, estimating that it could raise between RM5 billion and RM6 billion in capital.

The land is scattered across the country, with the largest tract in the Felda Sabahat plantation in Lahad Datu, Sabah, accounting for some 100,000ha, Mazlan said.

"Why are they taking KPF assets? Why are they taking all this land? Because FGVH has no money. Their overseas investments have failed. They have gone to Canada, they have gone to China, and they have failed.

"I don't know how the prime minister can have such faith in an even bigger investment plan that will go to

13 countries... this is how the settlers are being betrayed by Isa, who had been mandated by the prime minister and (deputy minister in charge of Felda) Ahmad Maslan (to run Felda).”

Mazlan stressed that Anak was opposed to plans to list FGVH on Bursa Malaysia, and would soon come up with a memorandum in protest of the move.

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