

More Umno leaders caught in 'Cowgate' scandal?

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Ramping up its onslaught on the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC), PKR has claimed to have unearthed more irregularities from financial records of the company owned by the family of a federal minister.

"I asked my staff to study the financial records and they noticed these (irregularities)," said secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution (centre in photo) at a press conference in the Parliament lobby.

He revealed that the scandal has extended to involving certain Umno leaders:

1. Cattle worth RM5,281 were apparently donated in 2009 to Works Minister Shaziman Mansor; and RM2,640 to a state assemblyperson identified only as 'YB Yunus' in the documents.
2. Cattle worth RM70,000 were allegedly sold on credit to former Federal Territories minister Zulhasnan Rafique in 2008; and the purchase price was only paid in full in 2009.
3. RM26,400 was allegedly paid for expenses incurred in 2008 by women affairs minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, whose family owns the NFC.
4. RM368,640 was said to be used for office rental and paid to NFC directors - Shahrizat's husband Mohamad Salleh Ismail and their son Wan Shahinur Izran.

"If it is true (as alleged by deputy premier Muhyiddin Yassin) that NFC has nothing to do with (Shahrizat), then she has no business dealing with the company, let alone have the firm pay her expenses," Saifuddin noted.

"I don't know what she used the money for. But I hope it was not for purchasing make-up or handbags!"

The company already stands accused of questionable spending of RM250 million in taxpayers' money awarded to it as a soft loan, but has not commented to date on the barrage of criticism.

Problems associated with the NFC operations were first brought to light in the 2010 Auditor-General's Report.

'Just the tip of iceberg'

Saifuddin further claimed that the claims involving Umno leaders are just the tip of the iceberg.

"We can disclose more details involving more Umno leaders in the use of the RM250 million in public funds... But I am saving the juicier bits for later," he said when pressed to elaborate.

Saifuddin questioned government statements about the 'soft loan'.

If this is true, he said, the company should have been paying at least RM5 million per annum at two percent interest.

"PKR's study of NFC's financial documents has yielded no recorded payments to the government, and neither has the two percent per annum been recorded as annual liability by the company," he said.

Malaysiakini attempted to verify the allegations with the parties named by PKR, but did not receive a response.

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