

It's Shahrizat's face-saving exit, says PKR
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The three-week leave from duties cabinet minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil is taking during the National Feedlot Centre probe is the mark of her exit, PKR parliamentarians are saying.

"It is a face-saving exit," said PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution, who is confident the women, family and community development minister will not be in Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's line-up for the 13th general election.

NONESahrizat's leave, which begins tomorrow, is the "first step" before she is dropped from the BN candidate list, Saifuddin (left) told Malaysiakini.

"It is only a matter of time before Shahrizat goes. She is trying to buy time... taking leave is just a face-saving exit.

"Najib will not keep her as a liability, for her case is bigger than those involving (Minister in the Prime Minister's Department) Jamil Khir Baharom and (Deputy Finance Minister) Awang Adek Hussin.

"This is not at all surprising," added the Machang MP, because the evidence linking her to NFC "is overwhelming".

Shahrizat has come under fire since the Auditor-General's 2010 Report was released last October.

The report states that National Feedlot Corporation (NFC), which is managed by her husband and children, was in a financial "mess" after being given RM250 million in public funds.

Shahrizat has insisted that NFC, which is being probed for criminal breach of trust by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the police, has nothing to do with her.

'Negotiations must have failed'

PKR has accused NFC of abusing a portion of the RM250 million allocation for the cattle-rearing project to buy luxury properties and prime plots of land unrelated to the project.

NONEPKR Wanita chief Zuraida Kamaruddin said Shahrizat's "much delayed" announcement was an indication of "negotiations" having failed.

"She should have done this long ago. She should have taken leave from her post until the issue is settled," said Zuraida, who is the Ampang MP.

"Instead, Shahrizat went on the offensive, unnecessarily," she said, adding that cattle farm project scandal would be the "bull's eye for the opposition to bring BN down".

Saifuddin maintained that Najib and his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin should also be held accountable for the NFC scandal as they were partly involved in awarding the project to Shahrizat's family.

He said Najib while serving as deputy to former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, chaired the cabinet committee on high impact agriculture projects, while Muhyiddin was then agriculture minister.

"Najib is also responsible... he and Muhyiddin have to disclose minutes of cabinet meetings to determine if Shahrizat was there when the project was handed out.

"We have to know what the roles of Najib and Muhyiddin were at that time. They can't stay silent forever," Saifuddin added.

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