

PAS veep wants RCI on 'NFC mismanagement'

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PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar has urged a government to set up a royal commission of inquiry (RCI) to probe the alleged mismanagement by National Feedlot Corporation (NFC), as freezing of the company's assets is not sufficient.

NONEMahfuz (right) said only with an RCI would an investigation be thorough because the problem started when the government awarded the multi-million ringgit cattle-rearing project to an inexperienced company in 2006.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced on Saturday that NFC assets were frozen temporarily pending investigation by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the police.

Prior that Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil went on a three-week leave from her ministerial duties to await the outcome of the investigations.

NONESahrizat's husband, Mohamed Salleh Ismail, is executive chairman of NFC and their children are directors of the company.

"I don't see how Shahrizat going on leave will solve the problem," said Mahfuz, however, commending the senator and minister's opting to take leave.

The Pokok Sena MP pointed out that freezing of NFC assets does not ensure the RM250 million soft loan can be recovered.

He recommended that individual assets of all those on the company's board of directors are also frozen.

"Assets are frozen when there is a case, but what is meant by 'case'? The government should reveal the details of the frozen assets.

"And what guarantee is there that assets frozen are enough to recompense the loan giving by the government?"

"What if the assets frozen are of lesser value than what was given?" asked Mahfuz.

pakatan rakyat convoy visit national feedlot corporation 031111 refused entry at gate story imageThe controversy surrounding NFC started after the Auditor-General's 2010 Report described the project of being in a "mess" and having failed to meet government targets.

The government had authorised a loan of RM250 million for NFC to start a national feedlot centre in Gemas, Negri Sembilan, to help reduce beef imports.

The initial target was to produce 60,000 head of cattle a year.

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

"It's not impossible, it has been revealed that there have been financial transactions between the company and its directors.

"What I'm worried that the frozen assets are actually of no value - are the assets just the cows, the pen

and cow dung?" he repeated.

Mahfuz insisted that only through an RCI investigation could get to the core of the controversy - when the mega project was first awarded.

"Only then the roles of Najib (while serving as deputy to former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi), who chaired the cabinet committee on high impact agriculture projects and Muhyiddin (Yassin) who was then agriculture minister can be known," he said.

"The action taken now seems like the issue only involves Shahrizat and her family members... but it started when the government appointed a company that is not familiar with the cattle business," he added.

MACC is said to be working on finalising investigation papers into its probe as to whether there are elements of corruption in the company's finances, before making recommendations to the Attorney-General's Chambers.

Police, on the other hand, are said to be probing NFC for cheating and criminal breach of trust.

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