

'PAC minutes on NFC may reveal gov't failures'

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The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) should provide members of parliament with the minutes of its meeting on the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) before the new parliamentary session begins next month.

PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar, making the call today, said this would reveal the government's failures in the scandal, which so far has focused on the NFC's alleged abuse of a RM250 million government soft loan.

The PAC had met with several government and NFC officials on Nov 3 last year.

Mahfuz said four committees had been tasked with monitoring the National Feedlot Centre project.

"If these committees had done their job and (supervised) how the loan was spent when it was released in stages, they would have stopped the loan, but they did not," he told a press conference at the PAS headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

One committee, he said, was the National Feedlot Centre Project Joint-Steering Committee led by then Agriculture Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, currently the deputy premier.

"(He chaired) the committee to oversee the project ... if the project failed, it is because they failed to oversee it," he said.

The other committees are the National Feedlot Centre Project Joint-Technical Committee, National Working Committee for the National Feedlot Centre Project and a ministerial level Coordinating Committee for the National Feedlot Centre Project.

'Minutes will verify claims'

Mahfuz said the minutes would also verify claims which the government had denied, such as NFC having receiving the loan before an agreement was signed, and that there were no personal guarantees.

"Another thing is, the government said the NFC project was never brought (up with) the cabinet, but the minutes say it was brought (up with) the High-impact Project Committee which was chaired by then Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak

He said the meeting involved several officials, including those from NFC, the auditor-general's office, National Accountant's Department, Finance Ministry and Agriculture Ministry.

Asked if he had obtained this information from PAC even though the minutes have yet to be made public, he replied: That, you should ask PAC."

Mahfuz also took de facto law minister Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz to task for suggesting that the controversy surrounding NFC is not a problem, as long as it repays the soft loan.

"Paying back or not is another matter, but a crime is a crime... Any acts of criminal breach of trust must be acted upon and be taken to court," Mahfuz added.

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