

'Unlike his dad, Najib seen as destroying Felda'

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INTERVIEW While second prime minister Abdul Razak Hussein is known as the nation's father of development, some view his son Najib as a destroyer of the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) programme, a plan which his father had built.

Anak president Mazlan Aliman said while Abdul Razak was seen as having a forward-looking policy of uplifting the Malays and plan for increasing the equity of bumiputeras by 30 percent, his son and other present-day leaders have used the present circumstances to gain personal wealth at the expense of settlers.

"Razak had laid a foundation for the Malays, but Najib, I would say, is to the opposite extreme to what his father had left behind in his legacy. I would say Najib in the extreme sense is seen as destroying what his father had built," he remarked.

Razak was the minister in charge of Felda from 1959 to 1970, while Najib has been the minister in charge since 2004.

Mazlan said Najib is hell-bent in going for the listing of Felda Global Venture Holdings Bhd (FGVH) scheduled on May 10, although there is strong opposition to it.

During Monday's interview, Mazlan had said that since the 1990s there have been failed projects by Umno politicians in preying on Felda settlements like Felda Cahaya Baru, in Masai, Johor; Felda Sungai Buaya, Hulu Selangor; and Felda Sendayan and Lyndon B Johnson in Negri Sembilan.

It was reported yesterday that the FGVH listing on Bursa Malaysia could generate RM21 billion on Bursa Malaysia and it was on overdrive over the listing.

Anak has been making allegations against the listing, including the proposed takeover of the cash-laden Koperasi Permodalan Felda Bhd (KPF).

Poser over why FGVH was chosen

Mazlan, in his interview with Malaysiakini, asked why FGVH was chosen for the listing exercise in preference to other companies, whereas it is a fact that FGVH is just three to four years old, and had made losses of RM500 million recently.

The Anak president said opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim had revealed the losses registered by FGVH and this RM500 million figure was verified by Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Ahmad Maslan.

He said FGVH, as a subsidiary of Felda, has investments in United States, Canada and China, where its record was terrible and furthermore its chief executive officer, Sabri Ahmad, who was hired from Golden Hope, also has a bad reputation as he was said to be responsible for some of the losses there.

"So how can a company which has a bad reputation go for a listing? What is the purpose of FGVH being chosen and why target KPF, as without the listing Felda, through Felda Holdings, is already a big entity with 47 subsidiaries and seen to be at par with other listed companies like IOI and Sime Darby.

"What is the motive as they claimed to want to put it on a global pedestal, when Felda is already there? They are hiding the original intent of the listing that is to take the assets of the land under Felda Holdings

and KPF. The settlers' lands are not included in the deal as this would lead to further protests," he said

azlanFelda Holdings, through Felda Plantations, owns 360,000ha of land nationwide, and this has not been distributed to the settlers since the 1990s following a policy to stop opening up new land.

Hence, Mazlan posed the question why did Najib choose FGVH as those that should be listed are KPF or Felda Plantations. However, he said, we see a company which is proven to be a failure being entrusted with the listing compared to other companies which are already competitive and productive.

"When FGVH was chosen, there were bad vibes or fears that another calamity may happen, looking at the track record of Felda Cahaya Baru. It could be bad news for the company, settlers and the workers," he said.

Depreciating reserves

Mazlan said the losses suffered by FGVH were borne by Felda, and these affect its liquidity.

He said former Land and Cooperatives Development deputy minister Tan Kee Kwong (now PKR disciplinary committee chief) had said Felda's revenue had reached RM10 billion.

"Such revenue could have been used to develop Felda Plantations and its operations. However, when Najib took over I got to know this reserve had depreciated," he said.

It was previously reported that Felda had, several years back, taken a RM5 billion loan.

Mazlan also pointed out that Najib had also used illegal means to try to appoint Felda chairperson Isa Samad as KPF chairperson through his letter dated last August.

"However, Isa cannot be chairperson because he does not fulfill the conditions of being a KPF cooperatives member as his post is under contract, and he only applied to be a member last June, whereas he must be a member for two years for him to qualify," he said.

"It is as if Najib is using the back way in wanting Isa to take the post, to stem dissension."

However, he noted that Najib is trying hard for the listing even to the point of going to the settlers directly to answer all allegations brought by Anak as was done in Perlis recently.

"This showed that he is worried that there exist a shift in support of the younger generation not to support BN. If the support of the younger generation in Felda to the opposition continues, then I am optimistic about the coming election," he said.