

Hadi, too, willing to debate with Najib
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Hafiz Yatim

PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang is willing to debate with Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak on any issue that concerns the people, its vice-president Mahfuz Omar said today.

PAS backs the calls for Najib, as the leader of the government, to debate with opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim - and it feels the prime minister should also be willing to debate with the PAS president, as PAS and Umno are the biggest Malay parties in the country.

"Najib can debate with Abdul Hadi on any issue, as PAS does not want to dictate terms. However, it should not be limited to issues pertaining to Malays and Islam only, as we are a multiracial country," Mahfuz (left) said.

"As shown with the previous debate, I feel the country's population can readily accept and is mature to watch and analyse the debate without any problem."

In the past, Mahfuz said, when he was PAS Youth chief, he had challenged Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussein to a debate.

At that time, he said, Royal Professor Ungku Aziz, was prepared to moderate the debate on the topic 'Who is the traitor to the Malays?', but the debate was called off at the eleventh hour.

"I am also willing to renew my challenge to Hishammuddin to debate and it can be on any topic," he said.

Mahfuz said the Islamist party had been waiting for a very long time, since the 1980s, to debate with Umno.

He said now is the best time to have it with the country being independent for more than 50 years.

NFC: Muhyiddin should explain approval

Mahfuz said Muhyiddin Yassin, who was a former agriculture minister, must explain his role in chairing two ministerial level committee which approved the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) project to Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's family.

He said Muhyiddin chaired the selection committee and also the monitoring committee which is supposed to monitor the project.

"Muhyiddin must be called to the Public Accounts Committee to explain his role. I feel the focus should not only be on the company getting the project but also the person who approved and was supposed to monitor it."

"This is also the right time for a royal commission of inquiry (RCI) to be held to investigate the matter. Muhyiddin may not be called in by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission to explain due to his stature, but he would have to be answerable to the PAC or RCI," he said.

Muhyiddin was the agriculture minister since 2004 and when the project was approved in 2006 or 2007.

Mahfuz said there may have been too much focus on Shahrizat, whereas similar emphasis should be placed on Muhyiddin on why he approved the project to a company which did not possess the necessary experience.

He said the then-agriculture minister should also be held accountable for the fiasco in approving the company and not monitoring its development.

Mahfuz also wants the minutes of PAC's Oct 23 meeting be revealed to all MPs, when the Agriculture Ministry officials were called in.

"PAC is answerable to the MPs as we appoint them. I also urge PAC to call back the ministry officers and go in-depth in its investigation into the approval," he said, adding that an RCI is the right move to resolve the NFC fiasco.

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