

'Out-of-court settlement does not absolve Najib'

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PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli continues to question the decision Najib Abdul Razak made, when he was defence minister, to award the construction of the National Defence Study Centre (Puspahanas) to a questionable company, which has resulted in the non-completion of the project until today.

NONERafizi (right) said he would continue to bring up the issue, despite the out-of-court settlement with former defence minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, in the Umno vice-president's defamation suit against him in the High Court in Kuala Lumpur today.

"Despite today's matter, it will not clean the awarding of the privatisation contract of Puspahanas done by Najib, as the defence minister then (in 2005), to Awan Megah Sdn Bhd.

"The company does not have the capability and is seen as having continuous issues, resulting in the project to be uncompleted till today.

"The Boustead Holdings Bhd board of directors decided to approve the RM160 million purchase of Awan Megah and Astacanggih Sdn Bhd, but the evaluation on the said transaction shows that Awan Megah does not have ownership of the 223-acre land in Bukit Raja.

"I will continue to seek answers to the two issues and highlight any abuses, if any, to those who are responsible," Rafizi said in a statement.

The Puspahanas project was awarded by the Defence Ministry to Awan Megah, then owned by Selangor Wanita Umno senator Raja Ropiaah Raja Abdullah, in 2005.

However, Awan Megah faced difficulty in securing a land bond of RM72.5 million, which was a condition set for the project. This resulted in Raja Ropiaah soliciting the help of carpet trader Deepak Jaikishan and his company, Astacanggih.

Rafizi said the decision to resolve the settlement of the suit came after Ahmad Zahid had explained and given current facts that he was not involved in the Boustead Holdings decision to pay RM160 million to Awan Megah and Astacanggih.

Willingness to sit down for healthy talk

This was why, he added, he agreed to withdraw his statement on the questionable transaction.

"I hope our willingness to sit down and discuss and explain the situation will become a good development in the political development of the country. As a politician, it is my job to question decisions of ministers and civil servants that I think go against public interest," he said.

NONE" There were no explanations made by the government or any civil servant over the matter, resulting in me to question it. It was only after this was raised that such information and facts were later revealed."

Rafizi explained that after receiving several explanations from Ahmad Zahid (right) over the matter raised, he was satisfied that Ahmad Zahid was not involved in the Boustead decision when he was defence minister.

He exclaimed that in a democracy it is incumbent on politicians or elected representatives to bring up issues of public interest.

"It is also the job of ministers to explain. After the explanation is given and if there were previous statements which were not correct, it would be wise that the previous erroneous statements are corrected or withdrawn.

"This is the spirit in which Ahmad Zahid and I have embraced, leading to today's settlement in court," Rafizi added.