

Auditor General Must Not 'Whitewash' NFC Scandal
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The Auditor-General Ambrin Buang must be forewarned that he would be destroying the credibility of the sole national institution which had kept its reputation intact in the past few decades if he succumbed to improper pressures to “whitewash” the RM300 million “cattle condo” scandal, whether the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) or the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp).

The NFCorp chairman Mohamad Salleh Ismail - husband of Woman, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil – has claimed that the Auditor-General in his 2010 Report had confused NFCorp, a private entity, with the NFC, which is owned by the Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Ministry.

Salleh said NFCorp is not the entity criticized in the Auditor-General's Report for being “a mess”.

I have re-read the Auditor-General's 2010 Report on the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) project and there is nothing to justify Salleh's claim that the Auditor General had made the most elementary mistake of confusing the two entities, mistaking NFC for NFCorp or vice versa.

Salleh should not try to escape responsibility and accountability for the RM300 million NFC/NFCorp “cattle condo” on such a technical and ridiculous ground.

Buang is right when he clarified on Wednesday that the word “mess” was never used by him to describe the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC), but was made by media reports on the Auditor-General's criticisms on the NFC project, and very rightly so.

The whole NFC/NFCorp scandal later ballooned to outrageous proportions with the expose of one scandal after another relating the financial hanky-panky of the NFCorp in the disbursement of the RM250 million government loan for the NFC project when Najib Razak was chairman of the Cabinet Committee on High Impact Projects and Muhyiddin Yassin was Agriculture and Agro-based Industry under Prime Minister Abdullah in 2006/7.

Ambrin Buang should be very jealous of the efforts (and very successful ones) by previous Auditor-Generals like Ahmad Nordin who became a legend and was synonymous with accountability and integrity in his lifetime, to protect the credibility and integrity of the Office of Auditor-General.

These efforts by a whole line of sterling Auditor-Generals have resulted in the Auditor-General's Office remaining as the only national institution to keep its reputation, credibility and integrity intact unlike other key institutions whether the judiciary, the Elections Commission, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, Police, etc who have lost their professionalism and integrity.

The proper place for the Auditor-General to make clarification on his 2010 Report particularly with reference to the NFC/NFCorp scandal, is the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC), and not as a result of improper pressures applied by NFCorp or various organisations or individuals with a political agenda of their own.

This is also why I am shocked that the PAC had been so tardy and not met urgently to conduct immediate investigations into the NFC scandal, when it has virtually become a daily staple scandal for Malaysians in the past three months.

Attempts to undermine the credibility and reputation of the Auditor-General should be new and added reason why the PAC Chairman, Azmi Khalid should convene a meeting of the PAC in the next few days to decide whether the PAC is to rise up to the challenge to conduct immediate and full investigations into

the NFC scandal or face censure in March meeting of Parliament for gross failure and irresponsibility.

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