

Cattle project boss says no longer speaking to media
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 21 — Finding himself cast in the spotlight again over PKR's latest round of allegations on the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal, Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail has retreated further into the shadows.

The NFC executive chairman refused today to refute, deny or confirm the allegations, saying he was no longer speaking to the media on the matter.

"No...I am not speaking to any media. I'm sorry," Mohamad Salleh told The Malaysian Insider in a soft, apologetic voice.

His wife, senior Cabinet minister and senator Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abd Jalil, has already absolved herself from any involvement in the RM250 million controversy.

In her first move to address the matter during the recent Umno annual general meeting, Shahrizat said it had nothing to do with her.

Since then, the Wanita Umno chief has neither moved to attack her accusers nor attempted to ward off the accusations by issuing a denial.

Faced again with the controversy today, her husband adopted the same approach.

When it was pointed out to him that he could use the media as an avenue to defend himself and his family against the allegations, he agreed but maintained his position.

"It is better for me to handle this intelligently and not speak to the press. I am not speaking to any media.... because it involves too many people," he explained before apologising again and ending the call.

In its latest expose on the NFC scandal yesterday, PKR alleged that RM10 million had been siphoned off from the cattle farming project's funds to purchase yet another luxurious condominium unit - in Singapore.

PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution said the 2,282-square feet condominium, one of the largest available at the posh Orchard Scotts Residences on Anthony Road, was purchased for S\$4.1 million by Shahrizat's family members on January 27 last year.

According to the currency exchange rate at the time of purchase, he said the unit would have cost about RM9.9 million.

Mohamad Salleh broke his family's silence on the scandal once recently and admitted at the time to NFC's purchase of two condominium units at the luxurious One Menerung in Bangsar for a staggering RM6.9 million each.

He however claimed the purchase was for investment reasons, adding that the units were rental cash cows.

PKR has relentlessly pursued the matter despite failing to pressure Putrajaya into taking action against Shahrizat or her family members.

The police are investigating the criminal breach of trust allegations.

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