

**PKR baits rural voters with NFC issue ahead of polls**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 25 — The National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) scandal has proven to be a hit among rural voters, according to PKR leaders who plan to use the issue as campaign fodder for the general elections.

The Malaysian Insider understands that Pakatan Rakyat, especially PKR have been going on a pre-polls campaign blitz using the graft allegations surrounding embattled Cabinet minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and her family to maximise voter support.

"In a way we are actually lucky. The NFC issue couldn't have come at a better time. Before this we were always trying to give examples of what we claim to be corruption by Umno-Barisan Nasional.

"But with this issue, we have a golden opportunity to reach out to a host of voters... for us, Shahrizat's case is the best example of what is wrong with Umno and its leaders... corruption, cronyism, money politics," Rafizi (picture) Ramli told The Malaysian Insider.

The PKR strategic director said that recent "test runs" by party leaders during ceramahs showed an increasing demand for the NFC scandal to be highlighted, especially among rural voters.

"In Kemaman, for instance where there's a ceramah, sometimes I don't bring up the NFC issue but then they get upset. The kampung folk, rural folk want to talk to about it. They are upset about it," he said.

"It's something they can relate to...you talk about submarine scandals it's a bit confusing, but with the NFC it's about lembu (cows)- how much do you need to menternak lembu (take care of cows) and how do you make money out of it.

"Whenever we mention the figures, people are outraged," added Rafizi.

He said PKR has also taken steps to ensure the entire chronology of the scandal could be "appreciated" and understood by all via pamphlets and posters.

PKR first latched onto the issue after the RM250 million federally-funded cattle project made it into the pages of the Auditor-General's report for 2010, which described the NFC as "a mess".

Since then, the party has made several revelations related to the scandal, including the NFC's purchase of twin multi-million luxury condominium units in Bangsar, the alleged use of project funds to finance Shahrizat and her family's personal expenses and trips abroad.

It also alleged there was a transfer of resources to unrelated companies in Singapore, as well as the purchase a Mercedes-Benz CLS350 for RM534,622 and two plots of land in Putrajaya's Precinct 10 for RM3,363,507.

The latest disclosure by PKR, made on Tuesday, alleged that some RM10 million was diverted towards the purchase of luxury condominium unit in Singapore for Shahrizat's family.

Shahrizat has sought to deflect away attention by stating she was "only the wife" of the national cattle farming project's chairman and had nothing to do with the NFC.

The Wanita Umno chief has faced calls to quit as minister from within her own party, including from influential former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, after repeated attacks from the opposition over the project awarded to her husband and three children, who are directors in the NFC.

In the latest development of the on-going scandal, police arrested a man on Thursday who allegedly tried to bribe senior officers investigating a high-profile commercial crime, which anti-graft officials say is linked to the NFC scandal.

The police obtained a remand order from the magistrate court for the 45-year-old man.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) said the man is now in their custody as part of their investigations into the case. MACC officials also raided the NFC office on Friday, carting away a desktop computer central processing unit (CPU) and four envelopes of documents.

It is understood that the suspect heads a consultancy firm and runs a taxi company.

CCID chief Datuk Syed Ismail Syed Azizan refused to confirm or deny if the suspect in question was involved in the controversial cattle raising scheme.

He also refused to comment on whether the man was related to NFC chairman Datuk Seri Mohamed Salleh Ismail, husband Shahrizat.

Last night, NFC issued a statement denying the man is related to the family or has ever worked with the company. The company had earlier disputed that there was a raid at its office, saying its officials cooperated with the MACC during a visit there on Friday.

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