

Pakatan vows to maintain pressure over cattle project
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GEMAS, Nov 3 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) vowed today not to let up in its attacks over the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) until Putrajaya admits that the RM250 million project is a failure.

PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli said the opposition intends to turn the NFC into a national talking point as it was a prime example of how taxpayers' monies had been misused to enrich those in power.

Rafizi (centre) speaks to a NFC worker through the gates about letting a PR delegation inspect the centre. — Picture by Jack Ooi

"There are a lot people in Gemas who can raise cattle. Why were people from Kuala Lumpur brought in to raise cattle, (to the point where) the cattle died?"

"RM250 million, you should have given it to as many farmers as possible, not one company," he told reporters outside the main gates of the NFC here.

Rafizi, with PR assemblymen Aminuddin Harun (Sikamat), Ravi Munusamy (Port Dickson), P. Gunasekaran (Senawang), Mohamad Taufek Abdul Ghani (Paroi) and Ng Chin Tsai (Temiang) had earlier tried to enter the NFC.

They were rebuffed by security despite arguing that they had a right to go in and "count cows" as the project involved public funds.

Rafizi pointed out that the NFC was only the tip of the iceberg as RM10 billion had been set aside for agricultural projects under the 9th Malaysia Plan (9MP) but little of it had reached poor farmers.

"We picked this project to show that if this can fail, what happened to the rest of the RM10 billion?" he said.

"There are many other failures. If (Agriculture and Agro-Based Industries Minister) Datuk Seri Noh Omar calls this successful, God only knows about the rest."

He also urged Women, Family and Community Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil — whose family has been linked to the NFC — and Noh to "come clean" on the project before PR "digs up more dirt" in the coming weeks.

"All of Negri Sembilan will be focused on Gemas. If they don't respond... we will ensure this becomes a bigger issue," he said, adding that this would hurt Shahrizat's political career.

The Auditor-General's Report released last week had criticised the NFC, pointing out that it was now "in a mess".

The report said production in 2010 was only 3,289 head of cattle or 41.1 per cent of the target set.

On Monday, Noh told Parliament the NFC was a success, insisting that the cattle farming scheme had met its target of 8,000 head of cattle by 2010.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak later also defended the project, saying that NFC was in the midst of upgrading its feedlot production capacity to 12,000 from 6,000 currently.

He said that the NFC's high-quality local beef could be found at supermarkets like Jaya Jusco, Giant, Carrefour and Cold Storage, as well as in wet markets, restaurants and retail shops nationwide.

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