

Kit Siang wants NFC chief to testify before PAC
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By Melissa Chi

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 20 — DAP's Lim Kit Siang challenged National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) chief Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail today to testify before the Parliamentary Accounts Committee (PAC) to prove his innocence.

"As Salleh has said that NFC has nothing to hide, he should volunteer to appear before the PAC . . . to put to rest all questions of impropriety, accountability and integrity," he said in a statement.

The PAC will conduct an internal hearing on the controversial National Feedlot Project (NFC) this Wednesday after weeks of graft allegations against the public-funded RM250 million cattle-farming project awarded to minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's family.

PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli and secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution have made repeated allegations of misappropriation of funds in the cattle farming project including RM10 million to pay for a luxury condominium.

Salleh, who is Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat's husband and NFC executive chairman, defended his company against the allegations in a press conference on Thursday.

According to media reports, Salleh claimed that the cattle farming project had exceeded its set target, disputing a federal audit describing the scheme as being "in a mess".

He also defended his company's purchase of two units at the luxurious One Menerung condominium in Bangsar, saying it was a sound investment that yielded 12.9 per cent returns in the first year.

"Malaysians not only want to hear what the NFC has got to say, but also what the government and in particular the ministers directly involved in the RM300 million NFC scandal have got to say," Lim (picture) said.

The Ipoh Timor MP also called on Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who was Agriculture Minister when the project was approved, to state if he felt it was "legally, morally and ethically proper" for NFC to use the RM250 million loan to invest in luxury condominiums.

"In fact, that is a question every Cabinet minister must now answer, whether this is not a criminal breach of trust and gross abuse of power and public funds," he said referring to the soft loan with an interest rate of just 2 per cent.

The NFC first became embroiled in controversy when its operations made it into the pages of the Auditor-General's Report for 2010.

The report, released last month, had criticised the RM250 million federally funded cattle project, pointing out that it was now "in a mess". It further said production in 2010 was only

3,289 head of cattle, or 41.1 per cent of the target set.

Putrajaya has steadfastly defended the project since then but numerous exposes by PKR, including the purchase of the two One Menerung condominiums, forced the company to break its silence this week.

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