

RM250m NFC award without Cabinet approval disturbing, says PKR
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By Melissa Chi

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 20 — PKR questioned today how the government could award a RM250 million project like the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) project without Cabinet approval.

PKR president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (picture) told reporters today she was “perturbed by the fact that the Cabinet was not involved in making the decision in the first place (as the Agriculture Minister stated).”

“That gives a lot of questions as to how a disbursement of RM250 million of public money is done,” she said.

Minister of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Datuk Seri Noh Omar denied yesterday that the decision to award the cattle farming project was discussed during Cabinet meetings.

He said the issue was only discussed by the Cabinet’s High-Impact Projects Committee.

PKR had demanded that the Najib administration disclose all Cabinet meeting minutes from 2006 onwards to determine if minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil was directly involved in the decision to award the NFC project to her family.

PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli had pointed out Datuk Mohamad Salleh Ismail, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat’s husband, had not denied a single allegation and merely offered explanations for the discrepancies in the project.

He said the NFC executive chairman had made three major admissions when addressing the issue on Thursday — that his company had no experience in the cattle farming industry prior to the project award; that the RM250 million government loan had not been accompanied by a repayment schedule; and that the company had purchased “not one, but two” luxury condominium units for a whopping RM13.8 million in total.

The cattle farming project kicked off in 2008.

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, pointed out the project 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.

“This is not the first time the Auditor’s report has been debated and then it fizzled out, and then comes another year, another Auditor’s report, it’s just an exercise in futility.

“Which means we are in dire strait in our country and we have to do something about it,” Wan Azizah added today.

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