

Shahrizat says NFC issue 'has nothing to do with me'

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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 28 — Faced with increasing public pressure, Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jalil said today she will address the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) controversy during Umno's general assembly this week, even though it has "nothing to do with me."

"It is not a problem if the NFC issue is debated... I will answer during Wanita Umno's assembly," she told reporters here.

"I will send a clear message to those people out there," said the federal minister, referring to Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

Shahrizat (picture) refused to elaborate further, saying the NFC issue "had nothing to do with me."

The NFC is managed by Shahrizat's husband and children.

"I am being patient, as a woman I have to be calm... they (PR) are doing this because they are afraid of Wanita Umno's strength," Shahrizat said today.

The NFC has been dogged by allegations of corruption and fund misappropriation after it made it into the pages of the Auditor-General's Report for 2010, which described the project "as a mess".

Among others, PKR has alleged that the NFC funds were used for Shahrizat's personal expenses and that of her family, as well as to buy multimillion ringgit condominium units at the luxurious One Menerung in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur.

Shahrizat's husband and NFC boss Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail has defended the purchase of the condo as well as denied the alleged failure of the project.

PKR scoffed at Mohamad Salleh's remarks, saying he had failed to deny a single allegation and had merely offered explanations for the many discrepancies involving the NFC.

Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar has denied the NFC was ever discussed in Cabinet, claiming it was handled by the Cabinet Committee for High-Impact Projects, which was then chaired by Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

PKR had alleged that the funds meant for the NFC were used to fund umrah packages and set up two Singapore-based companies, both owned by Shahrizat's family.

Party leaders claimed to have proof that Mohamad Salleh had ordered payment of RM31,580 to be made for his haj pilgrimage and that of his son Wan Shahinur Izran Mohamad Salleh's in 2010.

PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution, who is also Machang MP, had urged the police and the PAC to probe all transactions between the NFC and the National Meat and Livestocks Corporation (NMLC) and Real Food Company (RFC). Both NMLC and RFC are majority owned by Mohamad Salleh and his children Izran and Izmir.

He said this was because financial records showed that Singapore-based firms Global Biofuture Pte Ltd and Meatworks Singapore Pte Ltd, both of which are also owned by Shahrizat's family, currently have debts with the RFC.

As at June 2010, he said, Global Biofuture, which ran a food and fuel business, owed RFC RM939,495.

In the same period, Meatworks, a luxury restaurant chain, was found to be owing RFC RM2,416,815, he added.

Police are investigating the NFC for cheating or criminal breach of trust.

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