

PAS wants RCI, freeze on NFC directors' assets
The Malaysian Insider
January 16 , 2012
By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 16 — PAS called today for a royal commission of inquiry (RCI) to probe the award of the controversial RM250 million National Feedlot Centre (NFC) project as investigations by graftbusters only addressed the "symptom and not the cause."

PAS vice president Datuk Mahfuz Omar also said the asset freeze on the national cattle farming project should extend to Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's family, who make up the NFC board, as they have allegedly siphoned funds for their personal use.

"I don't see how the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) can only look at the management crisis in NFC but not how the project was awarded. No case would have arisen if there was transparency in the project award and proper procedures were followed.

"Now we are only investigating the symptom and not the cause. We gave to an inexperienced company and then these problems arose," he told a press conference today.

He said a full investigation by an RCI is required as "at the end of the investigation, they can say Shahrizat is not involved in any wrongdoing as her family just received the project."

"But Datuk Seri Najib Razak was chairman of the high-impact project committee and the agriculture minister when the project was awarded (in 2006) was Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin," he said, referring to the current prime minister and his deputy respectively.

Najib announced on Saturday the assets of the publicly-funded project had been frozen pending investigations into graft allegations surrounding the NFC.

But the NFC said yesterday operations remain uninterrupted despite the company's assets being frozen.

Mahfuz (picture) said today the asset freeze must also apply to NFC's board of directors as there have been reports of funds being transferred into their private accounts.

"The concern now is that we have frozen NFC's assets which could be just a farm, a few cattle and cow dung, whereas the money is now with the NFC board," he said, citing claims by PKR that more than RM100,000 was used to pay credit card bills of three NFC board members.

PKR has also alleged that at least RM5 million was channelled to other companies owned by Shahrizat's family, as well as to buy two RM6.9 million luxury condominiums in Bangsar and a RM10 million apartment in Singapore.

"If investigations find there is wrongdoing but the NFC accounts are empty, or less than the RM250 million loan given out, then we won't get back the amount already released by the government," he said.

The Pokok Sena MP also applauded women, family and community minister Shahrizat's decision to take leave to allow investigations to proceed freely and called on other ministers involved in the award of the project to follow suit.

The Wanita Umno chief applied for three weeks' leave from her ministerial duties last week after new allegations of bribery surfaced in the NFC project.

Shahrizat has denied any wrongdoing and stated she is "only the wife" of the project's chairman after facing calls to quit from within Umno including from influential former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/pas-wants-rci-freeze-on-nfc-directors-assets/>