

No reason to bribe cops, says NFCorp chief
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 31 — National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) chairman Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail has denied asking the company's former consultant, Datuk Shamsubahrin Ismail, to bribe the police to stop investigations into the RM250 million national cattle farming scandal.

The husband of senior minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said yesterday the company, which was awarded the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) project by the federal government in 2006, had no reason to bribe the police as investigations have been fair.

National Feedlot Corporation's former consultant, Datuk Shamsubahrin Ismail, after a recent court appearance. — file pic

"As far as the police are concerned, we have never had trouble answering their questions or cooperating with them, so we have no reason to bribe them," he was quoted as saying by the New Straits Times.

PKR held a press conference yesterday to distribute a police report made by Shamsubahrin on January 27 claiming he received calls and SMSes from Salleh "pressuring me to bribe police to close the NFC case."

"I have proof in the form of an SMS. I was not willing to do so although I was pressured repeatedly. I only replied saying I would try to sort out the matter," the report said.

Shamsubahrin also accused NFCorp of "cheating me by appointing me as Corporate Advisor and Consultant" in November 2011 which he said was a false appointment.

But the English-language daily quoted Salleh as saying, "NFC has never had problems with the police."

"The company hired Shamsubahrin as we badly needed someone to handle NFC's media relations, and he promised us that he had the experience and contacts in the media to do a good job."

Shamsubahrin was recently charged with cheating NFCorp chairman Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail of RM1.76 million in fraudulent consultancy fees.

The businessman, who PKR vice president N. Surendran said is still under remand in Sungai Buloh "because he fears for his safety", was charged last week with two further counts of cheating.

Salleh also denied that Shamsubahrin was hired as "a scapegoat" when the scandal blew up in November.

"If Shamsubahrin was a scapegoat, why was he constantly billing us and demanding that we pay him? Everything that he said was a lie," Salleh said, adding that he had several SMSes proving Shamsubahrin had pressured the company to pay him.

PKR had disclosed an email earlier this month detailing how NFCorp's lawyer allegedly told a Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) advisory board member that an official in the company had been tricked into paying money to a "conman" to influence a police probe into the project.

According to the email, the lawyer told the advisory board member how the NFC official had been tricked into paying money to a "conman" — understood to be Shamsubahrin — to allegedly influence ongoing investigations by the police.

Tan Sri Megat Najmuddin Megat Khas confirmed to The Malaysian Insider that he authored the email which PKR has presented as proof that a top NFC official had allegedly tried to bribe the police.

NFCorp's assets were frozen after investigations were launched by police and the MACC following a series of exposes by PKR against the company owned by senior minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's family.

The opposition party has accused NFCorp of spending at least RM27 million in public funds on land, property and expenses unrelated to cattle farming.

Shahrizat returns to ministerial duties on February 6 after taking three weeks' leave to allow the authorities to complete their probe.

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