

Muhyiddin: Shahrizat can decide future after probe
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 16 — Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil can decide on whether to resign after the probe into the controversial RM250 million National Feedlot Centre (NFC) project awarded to her family is completed.

The deputy prime minister, who was agriculture minister when the project was awarded in 2006, said all parties should be “patient” and not be “prejudiced” while investigations by police and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is ongoing.

“We cannot make assumptions as the matter is still under investigations. We cannot make predictions and I cannot be prejudiced. If there are findings that certain people are involved, then Shahrizat can make her decision,” he told reporters in Kuantan.

The women, family and community development minister has so far refused to heed calls from both the opposition and several Umno leaders to resign over allegations of abuse of power in the national cattle farming project.

Influential former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had called again yesterday on the Wanita Umno chief to step down and “not love your post so much that you refuse completely to part with it.”

Rumours have been circulating that the senator would tender her resignation to Cabinet this week but a minister confirmed with The Malaysian Insider that she did not.

The former Lembah Pantai MP had appeared to gain rousing support from both the Youth and her Wanita wing of Umno during the party’s annual general meeting last year after she denied any wrongdoing in the NFC scandal.

Despite this, other leaders apart from Dr Mahathir, such as Kinabatangan MP Datuk Bung Mokhtar Radin, have called for the women, family and community development minister to step down instead of “troubling us”.

De facto law minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz has also said the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) owned by Shahrizat’s husband and three children, committed breach of trust by using the government loan meant for cattle farming to fund other purchases.

PKR has made several claims of abuse of the federal loan involving over RM62 million in land, property and expenses unrelated to cattle farming.

Shahrizat’s son Wan Shahinur Izmir Salleh has insisted that the company decided it would make better use of the money by investing in property during a break in business operations due to the government’s decision to suspend construction of an abattoir that would have been rented to NFCorp.

The government awarded NFCorp the project in 2006, when Shahrizat was holding the same Cabinet portfolio.

She applied for three weeks' leave from her ministerial duties last month after new allegations of bribery surfaced and resumed work on February 8. She was called in for questioning by the MACC on the same day.

Muhyiddin (picture) announced last month Putrajaya would appoint an auditor to scrutinise NFCorp's books in light of accusations made against the company but dismissed calls for a royal commission of inquiry into the NFC.

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