

Up to A-G to charge others in NFC scandal, say prosecutors
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 12 — Prosecutors said today they will leave it to the Attorney-General to decide whether others will be charged with abusing public funds entrusted to the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp).

NFCorp executive chairman Datuk Seri Mohamed Salleh Ismail was charged today in the Sessions Court here with criminal breach of trust and violating the Companies Act in relation to RM49 million in federal funds given to the company.

He pleaded not guilty to the CBT charge as well two counts under the Companies Act in the scandal that has opened Datuk Seri Najib Razak and the Barisan Nasional (BN) government to damaging attacks ahead of elections expected soon.

“You’ll have to ask the A-G ... Only he can answer that. We will leave it to him,” deputy public prosecutor Dzulkifli Ahmad told reporters in court.

Dzulkifli is the head of the A-G’s commercial crimes unit in Putrajaya.

CCID director Datuk Syed Ismail Syed Azizan recently confirmed that the police had recommended that the Attorney-General’s Chambers charge NFCorp directors with criminal breach of trust.

NFCorp, which operates the national cattle-farming project, is chaired by Mohamad Salleh, the husband of federal minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil. Their three children also hold executive posts in the company.

The company has denied any criminal breach of trust in its loan agreement with the government and previously accused the police of “unfairly” pre-empting the charge.

Mohamad Salleh’s case is set for mention on April 13.

Shahrizat said yesterday she would step down as minister for women, family and community development when her term as senator ends on April 8, after months of attacks from the opposition.

The authorities were forced, by public anger as a result of allegations made by opposition politicians, to investigate whether her family had used part of a RM250 million ringgit loan from the government to the NFCorp to buy condominiums both here and abroad.

The NFCorp mess is not the first corruption scandal to hit Najib and Umno, but the farmyard connection makes it a potentially damaging one because many ordinary Malaysians have a better understanding of what allegedly transpired than more obscure financial matters.

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