

PAS questions FGVH profit figures, claims proof otherwise
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 19 — PAS doubts FELDA Global Ventures Holdings Bhd's (FGVH) announced profit figures, as the Islamist party continued hounding Putrajaya over the impending listing of the plantation outfit.

Its vice-president Salahuddin Ayub said today deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan told Parliament last week that FGVH's profits before tax amounted to RM203 million in 2009 and RM300 million in 2010.

"We have documents to challenge these figures. We want specific figures.

"We seriously doubt FELDA's performance," the Kubang Kerian MP told reporters here.

Salahuddin said he would give Ahmad three days to furnish Parliament with the necessary financial details.

"We want details of FGVH's investments, domestic and abroad," he added.

The FGVH listing, first mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak in his Budget 2012 speech, will see the loss-making unit take control of assets now under the FELDA Investment Co-operative (KPF).

Last month, eight FELDA settlers won a temporary court order blocking transfer of shares from KPF to FGVH, a crucial step in the government's plan to list the plantation firm unit.

But Putrajaya said last week it will push ahead with the proposed listing in June, with or without the 51 per cent stake in commercial arm FELDA Holdings held by settlers.

Ahmad said in a press conference this was because the government wished to capitalise on high crude palm oil (CPO) prices.

"If we cannot set the injunction aside or if they appeal, we still have to go ahead. We have to capitalise while CPO prices are high.

"That is the main factor for why we want to list in May, but now it will probably be in June. But we will go ahead without KPF," he had said.

The government previously insisted it had backing from a majority of settlers, despite reports of widespread opposition.

FELDA announced that proceeds from the IPO will now be channelled into a special purpose vehicle (SPV) to ensure settlers benefit directly from the listing, after the court blocked the shares transfer.

But PKR charged that the SPV would only lower FGVH's listing value, adding that the government's decision was a direct snub to KPF.

The co-operative has over 220,000 members, of which 112,635 are FELDA settlers while the rest are FELDA employees and children of settlers.

Reuters reported last month Putrajaya may delay FGVH's listing due to settlers' opposition, which risks undermining Barisan Nasional's (BN) support from voters long considered the ruling pact's vote bank.

Critics contend that the proposed listing, which will see loss-making FGVH assume control of KPF, will shortchange settlers and saddle FELDA with up to RM1.5 billion in yearly deficits.

FGVH subsidiaries such as FELDA Iffco Sdn Bhd, FELDA Global Technologies, FELDA Global Ventures Middle East and FELDA Global Ventures Arabia are reported to have chalked up accumulated losses of around RM500 million up to last year.

But Ahmad has said the unit recorded pre-tax profits of RM203 million and RM366 million in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

FELDA Holdings has a workforce of some 19,000 employees, with a labour force of 46,795 workers at 300 estates, 70 palm oil mills, seven refineries, four kernel-crushing plants, 13 rubber factories, manufacturing plants and logistic and bulking installations in Malaysia and overseas.

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