

NFCorp says KL Eco City properties were 'private investments'
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 8 — The National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) has denied using its government soft loan of RM250 million as leverage to purchase eight commercial properties in the KL Eco City development in Jalan Bangsar here as alleged by opposition lawmakers.

Instead, the company said the purchase was a "private investment" by its directors, who have faced a series of allegations for buying luxury properties instead of focusing on a national cattle-farming project to bring down the country's food import bill.

"NFCorp wishes to state that the properties have not been purchased by the company," NFCorp said in a short statement last night.

An artist's impression of the integrated urban city development in Bangsar. Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's husband Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail and their three children own and sit on the board of the NFCorp, which was awarded the loan in 2006 to run the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) cattle-farming scheme.

At a press conference yesterday, PKR alleged that Shahrizat's family had leveraged off NFC's funds to obtain personal loans for luxury properties, including the eight commercial units in KL Eco City, an integrated urban city development.

PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli alleged that the NFCorp directors had parked portions of NFC's millions in two banks as fixed deposits.

This, he explained, was to help them obtain "credit facilities" from the said banks in order to purchase a series of high-end properties.

Among others, Rafizi confirmed that purchases made include the nearly RM10 million condominium unit at the posh Orchard Scotts Residence in Singapore, and today's latest expose — eight shop office units at the luxurious KL Eco City development.

The eight units, he said, have a current estimated market value of RM12 million.

Rafizi alleged that prior to 2009, Mohamad Salleh and the three children had made similar purchases for personal reasons by directly tapping into NFC funds.

"They had some consultants come in and were advised to use the money market to make these purchases," he said.

According to documents from one bank, which Rafizi said were provided by a whistleblower, NFCorp directors had made two deposits totalling RM71,486,589 (RM71,395,617 and RM90,972) under the company's name and another deposit totalling RM1,872,254 under the National Meat and Livestock Corporation Sdn Bhd, a company also owned by Shahrizat's family members.

Two other documents showed that her family members had obtained a credit facility worth RM197,338 under another company they purportedly own called Agrosience Industries Sdn Bhd, a RM4,391,240 loan for a property purchase and that Mohamad Salleh was named as guarantor for another loan of RM663,743.

This, Rafizi said, citing the documents, was despite the fact that Mohamad Salleh merely has RM421 savings in the account while Agrosience merely has RM927.

He said further checks with bank documents not revealed to the press showed that the funds were channelled for the purchase of the eight KL Eco City units, which have a forced sale value of RM9,688,866.

"But the forced sale value only refers to the value of the property during auction and is lower than the actual market value. Based on the current market value for KL Eco City units, which is between RM1,000 and RM1,100 for each sq foot, PKR estimates the total market value for eight units at RM12 million," said Rafizi.

The NFC hit the headlines after it made it into the Auditor-General's Report last year, and has continued to hog the limelight after it was linked to Shahrizat and her family.

Shahrizat applied for three weeks' leave from her ministerial duties in January 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.

Bukit Aman recommended last month that the Attorney-General charge NFCorp directors with criminal breach of trust, an opinion that was shared by de facto law minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz.

But the A-G has since asked police for more investigations to be conducted.

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