

Anwar: Najib's 'personal vendetta' to charge Rafizi
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 1 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today accused Datuk Seri Najib Razak of having a "personal vendetta" against PKR's Rafizi Ramli for exposing the scandals in his administration, saying today's move to arrest and charge the young leader was to silence him.

The Opposition Leader said he was certain Rafizi's charges were because of the latter's pursuit of exposes involving the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp), which is run by the family of former minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, and the George Kent consortium, which just won the lucrative Ampang LRT extension deal.

Rafizi has repeatedly accused Najib of allegedly interfering in the tender bid and granting the multimillion contract to George Kent, which he claimed was controlled by a "close associate" of the prime minister and which also scored one of the lowest points in the technical and commercial evaluation for the project.

"By exposing continuously these scandals for months, Rafizi has built powerful enemies and now they are using what is at their disposal.

"This is Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's personal vendetta being played out by the various government agencies," Anwar said in a statement here.

The Permatang Pauh MP added that the move to charge Rafizi in court today was merely a smokescreen to frighten off Malaysians trying to unearth the truth behind the awarding of contracts involving Barisan Nasional (BN) leader.

"I commend Rafizi and the courage he has shown, and to his family I ask them to bear through these hard times and remember that social justice will prevail in the end," he said.

Rafizi, who is PKR's strategy director and the man at the forefront of the famous National Feedlot Centre (NFC) exposes, was charged today with violating the Banking and Financial Institutions Act (BAFIA) in exposing confidential banking details related of NFCorp.

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The firm, owned by Shahrizat's family members, runs the federal government's cattle farming project that has been at the centre of a RM250 million scandal.

The charge proffered under Section 97(1) of the BAFIA stated that Rafizi had disclosed four customer account profiles detailing the balance summary for the NFCorp, the National Meat and Livestock Sdn Bhd, Agrosience and Industries Sdn Bhd and NFCorp chairman Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail, to two individuals identified as Yusuf Abdul Alim and Erle Martin Carvalho.

Under Section 103(1)(a) of the same law, he could be fined a maximum of RM3 million and jailed up to three years if found guilty, which could seriously hobble Rafizi's chance of

standing as a candidate in the 13th general elections that must be held by April next year when the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition's mandate expires.

The NFCorp and the cattle farming scandal hit the headlines last year when the Auditor-General reported that it had missed its production targets.

Shahrizat, who was a minister when the project was awarded to her family in 2006, relinquished her Cabinet post in early April over the allegations against her family.

On March 12, her husband, Mohamad Salleh, pleaded not guilty in the Sessions Court to two counts of criminal breach of trust involving RM49.7 million with regards to the purchase of two condominium units.

He also pleaded not guilty to two other charges under the Companies Act.

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