

PAC postpones hearing

NO SHOW: NFCorp directors fail to show up before the Parliament committee

THE Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) hearing on the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) has been postponed as the company's directors failed to attend the meeting.

PAC chairman Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid said the committee were told that the directors decided not to attend the meeting after they were advised not to do so by their lawyers.

"We understand that the directors were absent to avoid controversy with the current court trial.

"Our next step is to get advice from the speaker before we proceed with the next hearing.

"We need to know what we can ask and what we can't in order not to interfere with the court proceedings," Azmi said after the select committee meeting in Parliament.

The PAC will continue with its meeting today on the NFCorp, where Azmi will brief

the members of the PAC on what the speaker has advised.

At the select committee meeting, none of the NFCorp directors were present.

Only the company's human resource general manager, Wan Zurina Saaran, attended, accompanied by two lawyers.

Azmi said the meeting was supposed to focus on how the RM250 million federal loan was spent for the cattle-farming business.

"Unfortunately, she was the human resource general manager and the two lawyers were the ones who did most of the talking, saying it might incriminate their clients.

"But we argued that we could ask questions that will not interfere with the ongoing court proceedings because there are still many unrelated questions to the court case that went unanswered," Azmi said after the 45-minute meeting.

The NFCorp controversy unfolded after the 2010 Auditor-General's Report said the RM250 million project had not met the targets set by the government.

Last week, NFCorp executive chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mohamed Salleh Ismail pleaded not guilty after he was charged at the Sessions Court with four counts of criminal breach of trust and misappropriation of almost RM50 million.

Salleh is Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's husband and their children are on the board of directors of NFCorp.

In a statement yesterday, NFCorp said its legal team had attended the proceedings of the PAC on behalf of Salleh.

The lawyers said Salleh could not accept the invitation of the agriculture and agro-based industry minister to appear before the PAC due to the ongoing trial against him.

NFCorp's lawyers had also informed the PAC that in view of pending charges, the subject matter was considered subjudice.



**AT THE
DEWAN
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YESTERDAY**