

New Straits Times December 2019

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1. Najib forgets IC; starts day one of testimony by saying 1MDB was hangover caused by TIA



Datuk Seri Najib Razak started off his day in court today by joining a handful of supporters in prayer, before going on to testify under oath in the SRC International Bhd trial, in which he is charged with misappropriating RM42 million of the company's funds.

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak started off his day in court today by joining a handful of supporters in prayer, before going on to testify under oath in the SRC International Bhd trial, in which he is charged with misappropriating RM42 million of the company's funds.

The former Prime Minister, who was dressed immaculately in his trademark suit and tie, read from a prepared statement as he took to the stand about 10.30am.

However, there was a brief moment of awkwardness before he could start, as Najib was unable to produce his identity card (IC) when asked to do so by the court interpreter.

After fumbling about in his pockets, Najib said he did not have his IC on him before looking up at his aides in the gallery for help.

At this juncture, his lead counsel, Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah got up and assured the judge that the defence would produce the IC shortly.

"I am sure we can all appreciate that people of this stature don't always have these things on their mind.

"Even former US president Barrack Obama experienced this after he left office. He was unable to buy a bouquet of flowers for his wife because he did not have his credit cards on him," he said.

Judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali nodded in response and Najib then went on to take the oath in English and Bahasa Malaysia before starting his testimony.

Shafee said his client would be reading from a prepared statement in Bahasa Malaysia.

"Given his position, it is only right that he testifies in the national language", he said.

A group of Najib's hardcore supporters, most of whom have been diligently following the trial from day one, listened attentively as he spoke in a clear, crisp voice while occasionally looking up at the judge to drive home points that he was making.

Among those present in the gallery to witness this historical day, on which a former prime minister of this country was testifying in his defence for the first time, were lawyers, representatives from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and members of the press.

Najib's former deputy, Datuk Zahid Hamidi - who is himself facing corruption charges in another court, also made a brief appearance at around noon to lend his support.

Najib, 66, started his testimony by outlining his background and political career. This included his tenure as former Deputy Minister before he went on to become the Menteri Besar of Pahang and then as a Minister holding various portfolios.

The Pekan Member of Parliament proceeded to explain the formation of the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) sovereign wealth fund.

He related how it started off as the Terengganu Investment Authority (TIA), which was established by the then-Yang DiPertuan Agong, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, in early 2009.

He said fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low was then already a close acquaintance of Sultan Mizan and his sister, Tengku Datuk Rahimah Sultan Mahmud.

Najib said the concept of TIA was formulated based on discussions between Jho Low, Sultan Mizan and the Terengganu government, and it had a capital of RM11 billion.

The capital was supposed to be derived from RM6 billion in oil royalty owed to the Terengganu state government, and the issuance of RM5 billion in Islamic Medium Term Notes (IMTN).

Najib said this, however, ran into problems when the Terengganu government could not agree with some of the terms, even though the bonds had been issued.

"The cabinet then decided to take over TIA. It was a decision that was made very reluctantly to protect the state government and the YDP Agong from embarrassment", he said, adding that it was also to avoid a negative impact on the Malaysian bond market, globally.

Najib said Low was at that time portrayed as a very influential person with connections in the Middle East.

On the 1MDB operations, Najib said he was never directly involved in the management of the fund, nor the appointment of its senior management.

"I only dealt with the company chief executive," he said.

Touching on SRC International, Najib said that it was established to look into additional power needs for the country following a proposal by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) and the Finance Ministry, in line with the National Energy Policy.

On SRC International's RM4 billion loan application from the Retirement Fund Incorporated (KWAP), Najib said he had only provided support by writing 'setuju' (agree) on a letter - but that did not mean it was a final decision.

"It (was) still subject to review and processes by the officers. It (was) not a carte blanche approval", he said.

He also denied ordering government guarantees for SRC's loan to be sped up, and reiterated that he had no interest in the company.

On SRC's funds being channelled abroad, Najib said he did not know the details, as such matters were decided by the board of directors.

"As prime minister and finance minister, I assumed the (chair of the) board of directors of all MoF Inc companies based on the best interest of their businesses and investments", he said.

Najib will continue with his testimony tomorrow.

He is facing three counts of criminal breach of trust (CBT), and one count of abuse of power over funds amounting to RM42 million linked to SRC International.

He is also facing three money laundering charges over the same fund. He faces up to 20 years in jail and fine for the offences.

2. Shafee: 'Najib acted in the best interest of the govt and never misused his office'



Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah today laid out the line of defence that Datuk Seri Najib Razak intends to take in clearing his name against charges of abusing SRC International funds.

KUALA LUMPUR; Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah today laid out the line of defence that Datuk Seri Najib Razak intends to take in clearing his name against charges of abusing SRC International funds.

The former prime minister, Shafee said, had at all times acted in the best interests of the Government of Malaysia and not for any personal gain.

He said the bulk of the evidence had also shown that Najib had "no knowledge of, or reasonable suspicion" to believe that money which had been banked into his personal accounts was proceeds of any illegal activity.

He said Najib merely relied on information provided to him based on the surrounding circumstances that existed from 2011 to 2015.

Touching on all the money which had been banked into Najib's accounts and used by the latter, Shafee said the Investigating Officer (IO) in the case had himself testified that the total usage of the funds by way of cheques issued and credit card expenditure was consistent with corporate social responsibility (CSR) purposes and not for personal enrichment.

He said 98 per cent of the funds utilised were for CSR, 1.5 per cent was used for a gift to a foreign signatory and only 0.5 per cent was used for other purposes.

"My client will confirm this stunning fact and this court can then infer whether such spending, which never benefited him personally but a cross section of the public at large, is the action of a criminal."

He said Najib's utilisation of the funds from 2011 to 2015 were almost all for CSR related matters to promote political, social, charitable causes and community related projects.

"Quite apart from this, the Credit Cards were charged for gifts to foreign dignitaries and some personal expenses. The amount utilised for personal matters was minimal and in any event was done in the belief that the money could be utilised by him as he deemed fit.

"Najib never intended to wrongfully gain or enrich himself with any of those funds and never intended to cause harm to any party.. he was being misrepresented about the transactions and actual balances in his accounts in 2013 to 2015 and his accounts were being manipulated by third parties without his knowledge and approval," he said.

Shafee said Najib was not involved in any corrupt arrangement involving funds of SRC International and did not solicit any bribes from any person.

"The RM42 million transferred into his account was done without his knowledge or involvement and was not a form of gratification related to any act of Najib concerning SRC International," he said.

Shafee said this in his opening statement at the start of Najib's defence where the former prime minister is accused of misappropriating SRC International funds.

Najib is facing three counts of criminal breach of trust and one count of abuse of power over funds amounting to RM42 million linked to SRC International.

He is also facing three money laundering charges over the same funds and faces up to 20 years jail and fine for the offences.

Shafee said the evidence as a whole does not support the inference that the RM42 million banked into Najib's accounts was gratification which the Pekan member of parliament received as part of a corrupt arrangement.

"The evidence in fact reflects that there was no nexus between any of the acts of Datuk Seri Najib vis-à-vis SRC in 2011 and 2012 and the transfer of these funds into his accounts in 2014 and 2015.

"The impetus and cause of the transactions in 2014 and 2015 reflected in the contemporaneous records in evidence also does not support any such nexus or the existence of a single continuous plot or scheme by Datuk Seri Najib," he said.

On questions about Najib's failure to lodge a police report or complain about transactions in his personal bank accounts, Shafee said his client did not do so as this was already being investigated by the authorities at that time.

Najib, he said, chose "to respect the process and integrity on the then on-going investigations."

"This very reason was recorded in the reply filed on behalf of Najib in the civil suit he brought against (former MCA president) Tun Dr Ling Leong Sik which was filed on Jan 12, 2016.

"Ultimately the findings of the then Attorney General on the matter was published in 2016 and given the same no further action was required," he said.

Shafee then outlined that Najib will himself give evidence on the events which led to 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) being set up and approved by the Cabinet and the intended involvement of SRC international in matters relating to key national development areas.

Shafee said Najib will also explain the government's endorsement to the setting up of SRC International and its support for the Retirement Fund Incorporated (KWAP) to provide RM4 billion loan to the company.

He said the defence will also show that Najib did not control or direct the SRC International board of directors on any matter as everything concerning the company was left in the hands of the "competent, extremely qualified and experienced" members of the board.

"We will also show that Najib had no knowledge or involvement in the matters which resulted in funds flowing out of SRC International accounts.

"It was the surrounding circumstances and material events which led Najib to believe that Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low was a close associate of the royal family of Saudi Arabia and that money he received from 2011 to 2014 were in fact donations from King Abdullah, in pursuance to assurances my client received from King Abdullah himself."

Shafee said Najib had at all times thought matters relating to the opening of his CSR accounts, the remittances into the accounts and supporting documents for the same had been duly reported to Bank Negara Malaysia and its then Governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz.

"This fortified his belief that nothing sinister was taking place."

Shafee said the defence will ultimately submit that Najib had always acted in the best interest if the government and never misused his office.

"Ultimately we will pray for an order that Najib is acquitted and discharged of all seven charges."

3. Najib: 'Nik Faisal played us out'

KUALA LUMPUR: The former chief executive (CEO) of SRC International Sdn Bhd, Nik Faisal Ariff Kamil, "played both sides", leading to the company being ripped off, Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today.

He said Nik Faisal told SRC board of directors one thing, and told him another when the latter briefed him about happenings in the company.

"We were played out by him...He briefed me about decisions made by the directors but at the same time he gave them instructions saying that I had approved certain decisions," he said, referring to Nik Faisal who has been on the run since the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal broke.

Najib, who was testifying in his defence in the SRC International trial where he is accused of misappropriating RM42 million of the company funds, said he was never involved in micro-managing any of Ministry of Finance Inc (MoF Inc) companies, including SRC International.

He also expressed shock that the company's top management, including its chairman Tan Sri Ismee Ismail had never bothered to verify things but blindly followed whatever was told to them by Nik Faisal.

"Ismee was an experienced person who had managed other government-linked companies (GLCs).

"He had my private mobile number and could have contacted me anytime. We also met several times but he never raised anything about what Nik Faisal told the board."

During the course of his testimony today, Najib also touched on the donation which was banked into his personal accounts and later returned to the Saudi royal family.

Najib said he had instructed former principal private secretary, the late Datuk Azlin Alias to return a huge sum of the unused donation to Tanore Finance Corporation in 2013.

He said US\$620 million was returned to the corporation because fugitive businessmen Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low had confirmed that the Saudi royalty wanted it to be banked in there.

"All this information was relayed to Azlin by Jho Low.

"The money was returned in tranches because we did not want to destabilise the Ringgit by converting a lump sum at one go," he said.

On the management of his personal banking account, Najib explained that he was forced to appoint an authorised person to handle it because he was tied up with his official duties as prime minister, finance minister, Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman at that time.

He said all these responsibilities left him with no time to manage the accounts himself.

Najib will continue his testimony before High Court judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali on Monday.

He is facing three counts of criminal breach of trust (CBT) and one count of abuse of power over funds amounting to RM42 million linked to SRC International.

He is also facing three money laundering charges over the same fund. He faces up to 20 years in jail and fine for the offenses.



Datuk Seri Najib Razak (right) who was testifying in his defence in the SRC International trial where he is accused of misappropriating RM42 million of the company funds, said he was never involved in micro-managing any of Ministry of Finance Inc (MoF Inc) companies, including SRC International.

4. Najib talks about Jho Low and Arab donations



Datuk Seri Najib Razak finally touched on his relationship with fugitive businessmen, Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low and events leading up to the billions in donation from King Abdullah Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, which ended up in his private banking accounts

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak finally touched on his relationship with fugitive businessmen, Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low and events leading up to the billions in donation from King Abdullah Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, which ended up in his private banking accounts.

The much awaited testimony on this contentious relationship between the duo was raised as Najib continued with his testimony under oath on the second day of his defence in the SRC International Bhd trial where he is accused of misappropriating RM42 million of the company funds.

Najib said he first came to know Jho Low sometime in 2007 when his stepson, Riza Aziz introduced them.

He said Jho Low was a graduate of Wharton Business School in the United States and had become a very successful entrepreneur at a young age with his own private investment fund.

Low, he said, was later successful in working out a deal between the Arabs and Khazanah Nasional project in Iskandar Development.

"He was also involved in the takeover of the Utama Banking Group Bhd (UBG) with (former Sarawak chief minister) Tun Taib Mahmud's family. I later got to know that Low was also close to Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin," he said, adding Low eventually became a very influential person who had close relations with royalties and connected people in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia.

Low, he said, was able to arrange for meetings with all these influential people and this boosted his confidence in the businessmen.

Asked by lawyer, Wan Aizuddin Wan Mohammed what led him to believe that Low had influence with the Saudi and UAE royal families, Najib said there were several incidents which happened that influenced him.

He cited Low's ability to get a huge investment from Mubadala Development company which is owned by the UAE to invest in the Iskandar Development region.

Najib said Low again proved himself in 2011 when he played an important role in getting the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, General Sheikh Mohammed Zayed Al Nahyan to visit Malaysia.

"Low was also able to set up a meeting with Prince Turki of Saudi Arabia which saw 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) to enter into a joint venture with PetroSaudi in Sept 2009," he said.

Najib said, Prince Turki, who was then the Governor of Riyadh, was a favourite son of King Abdullah at that time.

"Prince Turki was also an impressive person as he was the Squadron Leader of the F15 fighter jets in Saudi Arabia.

"He being the co-owner of PetroSaudi strengthened my confidence in what they were telling me," he said.

Najib said it was also Low who arranged meetings between him and King Abdullah during several of his visits to Riyadh and Jeddah.

"In 2010, before I went on an official visit to Saudi Arabia, Low told me that King Abdullah was very impressed with Malaysia's ability to maintain moderation and how we treated the Muslims and non-Muslims equally.

"He said King Abdullah wanted to bestow me with the highest honour by presenting me with the King Abdulaziz Order of Merit (1st class). This award was previously given to the President of the United States Barrack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin."

Asked if this really happened, Najib replied in the affirmative and said he also managed to raise Malaysia-Saudi Arabia relations during his meeting with King Abdullah.

"King Abdullah expressed his concern about the rising threat of Islamic militants and asked me to ensure Malaysia was free of such negative influences.

"King Abdullah gave me his personal assurance that he will give me all the support to ensure I can lead Malaysia and make it as a model of a successful Islamic nation."

Najib said sometime in 2010, Low told him that King Abdullah wanted to give him a personal donation but he was not informed about the amount.

He said Low informed him that the donation would be handled by the King's son and that details would follow.

"I got a huge sum of money from 2011 to 2014 and I believed that this was the donation.

"Jho

Low was the link man and I believed that he was the one handling all the donation for the Arab royalty. I also received several letters on this donations from Jho Low."

Asked if Jho Low had informed him about the exact amount, Najib said he was only told that it would be somewhere between US\$100 million to US\$200 million.

Najib said he knew the Saudi royalty could be generous and they had also donated huge sums to organisations like the Clinton Foundation in the United States and countries like Egypt, Pakistan and Palestine.

He added that his confidence in Low was further raised when King Abdullah raised the Haj quota for Malaysia and assisted Malaysian students who were stranded during the Arab Spring uprising.

"Jho Low arranged for two aircraft to fly the students from Egypt to Jeddah.

"I also received the Qiswah cloth (the cloth which covers the entrance to the Kaabah)."

Najib, 66, is facing three counts of criminal breach of trust (CBT) and one count of abuse of power over funds amounting to RM42 million linked to the SRC International.

He is also facing three money laundering charges over the same fund. He faces up to 20 years' jail and a fine if convicted.

5. MACC to investigate RMN boat tender, says Latheefa Koya



Latheefa Koya was replying to questions from the media on claims made on the WhatsApp application that there had been fraud and abuse of power in the management of tenders for the supply of 18 FIC boats by RMN

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will investigate embezzlement element in the tender of fast interceptor crafts (FIC) for the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN).

MACC Chief Commissioner Latheefa Koya said the outcome of the probe will be revealed to the public once completed.

"We will investigate if there are reports concerning the case. You will all be told later," she told reporters after delivering her keynote speech at the Business Ethics and Integrity: Expanding Business Through Ethical Practices" seminar here today.

She was replying to questions from the media on claims made on the WhatsApp application that there had been fraud and abuse of power in the management of tenders for the supply of 18 FIC boats by RMN.

Meanwhile, Latheefa said most commercial companies were prepared to abide by the new provisions of the Section 17A of the MACC Act 2009 which will be effective in June 2020.

She said the provisions were not only focused on corruption, but also take those people who ordered the corrupt practice to court.

"If previously, the employee who committed the corrupt act is charged, but through Section 17A, the employer who ordered him to perform the corrupt act will not escape," she said.

Section 17A of the MACC Act 2009 was passed by Parliament on April 5 last year and provides that where an offence is committed by a commercial organisation, the director, controller, officer, partner and persons managing its affairs at the time of commission of the offence is deemed to have committed the offence of failing to prevent corruption.

6. Former AG to be called as Najib's witness



Former Attorney General Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali, who had cleared Datuk Seri Najib Razak of any wrongdoing in the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal, will be called as a defence witness in the SRC International Bhd trial involving the former prime minister.

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Attorney General Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali, who had cleared Datuk Seri Najib Razak of any wrongdoing in the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal, will be called as a defence witness in the SRC International Bhd trial involving the former prime minister.

Najib's lawyers confirmed this after he finished reading a portion of his witness statement quoting Apandi's press statement in 2016 which cleared him of any blame.

The 66-year old Pekan member of parliament said Apandi had then made it clear that investigations had been concluded and the AG's chambers did not find anything which implicated him.

Najib's lawyers wanted to tender Apandi's statement as a defence exhibit but it was objected to by lead prosecutor Datuk Seri V Sithambaram on the basis that press reports could not be tendered as evidence.

The defence team then said they would be calling Apandi himself to testify as their witness.

It was reported that the government terminated Apandi's services as AG in June last year, one month after the Barisan Nasional-led administration under Najib was toppled by Pakatan Harapan.

Apandi was subsequently replaced by Tan Sri Tommy Thomas, who is now the head prosecutor in the SRC International trial.

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He is also facing three money laundering charges over the same fund and faces up to 20-years jail if convicted.

7. Najib defends spending RM3.2mil to buy gifts for Qatari PM



The former prime minister said whatever he spent had actually been done in the best interest of the country even though he used his own money to do so. -

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak today defended his credit card spending, which he claimed had been sensationalised, during his ongoing trial.

The former prime minister said whatever he spent had actually been done in the best interest of the country even though he used his own money to do so.

Detailing his expenditure as reflected in his credit card statements which had been revealed during the course of the ongoing SRC International Bhd trial in which he was accused of misappropriating RM42 million of the company funds, Najib admitted he spent over RM3 million at a famous Italian jeweller in Sardinia in August 2014.

"Yes, I did spend RM3,282,734.16 (EU763,500.00) at the famous De Grisogono store in Sardinia, Italy on Aug 8, 2014.

"I had to do it...I had bumped into Sheikh Ahmed Jassim Al Thani while holidaying there. He is a renowned businessman, politician and a member of the Qatari royal family. The Sheikh was also the prime minister of Qatar at that time," he said.

Najib said he spent the money buying gifts for Sheikh Ahmad's wife on the realisation that Qatar had strong diplomatic ties with Malaysia which was especially beneficial to us.

He added that Sheikh Ahmad and his wife, Noor Abdulaziz Abdulla Turki Al-Subaie had also presented gifts to him and his wife during their official trips to Malaysia.

"It was on this basis that I had to reciprocate their generosity with nothing less than what they had shown us all this while," he said, adding that he paid for the gift from his own pocket with his credit card as he did not want to use public funds for that purpose.

Najib said the Qatari government had sent a thank you note to him and his wife shortly after they returned to Malaysia from their holiday.

The note, he said, was signed off by Noor Abdulaziz.

Asked if he had the right to use funds in his private account to buy the gift, Najib said as far as he was concerned he had absolute discretion to use the money for whatever purposes he deemed fit.

"As far as I was concerned the purchase of the gift was something which is acceptable as far as diplomatic relations are concerned."

On his other two major expenditures which had been raised during the trial, namely the US130,625.00 (RM466,330.11) at the Chanel store in Honolulu on Dec 22, 2014, and RM127,017.46 at the Shangri-La Hotel in Bangkok in January 2015, Najib said he had shopped at the Chanel store to buy an anniversary gift for his wife.

"I bought her a watch from the store.

"As for the expenses in Bangkok, I had gone there to continue my holidays after I was forced to return home to visit flood victims in Kota Baru. Even though I was on holiday, I took the opportunity to meet with my Thai counterpart, Prayut Chan-o-Cha to discuss how the Thais could help us with the flood situation in our country," he said.

Najib said he spent RM120,000 at the hotel to cover miscellaneous expenses and room charges for himself and his entourage.

"I could have claimed it all back as I had also carried out official duties during my stay in Bangkok but I never did," he said.

Najib said he had been very careful with how he spent money in his accounts and noted that only 0.4 per cent of the total sum which he received was forked out on his personal expenses.

The trial before High Court Judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali continues.

8. Najib: I never checked, because the money came after I spoke to King Abdullah



Datuk Seri Najib Razak said he never bothered to check with Wisma Putra on the authenticity of the so-called 'donation' from King Abdullah Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia which was transferred to his private bank accounts.

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak said he never bothered to check with Wisma Putra on the authenticity of the so-called 'donation' from King Abdullah Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia which was transferred to his private bank accounts.

The former prime minister said this was because the donation was received not long after he met the late King Abdullah.

"The King spoke to me personally and he expressed his support of my leadership when I was there (in Saudi Arabia) on an official visit in Jan, 2010," he said.

Najib also spoke of fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low's role in Malaysia-Saudi Arabia relations back then.

He said Low's close ties with Saudi royalty had cemented his trust in the fugitive businessman at the time.

"He was recognised as a middleman for the Saudi royalty. I had no reason whatsoever to doubt that the money I received was genuinely a donation.

"I must also stress here that this donation was never kept a secret. AmBank was aware of it... all the transactions and related documents were reported to Bank Negara and its then-Governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz. It was never an issue then," he said.

On the letters in his possession allegedly from the Saudi royal family, Najib said they were given to him by Low.

Stressing that he had no reason to doubt the authenticity of the letters, Najib - who was also former Finance Minister - said he was relieved that copies of the letters were also given to all the relevant authorities at that time.

"The fact that Bank Negara never raised any red flags from 2011 to 2014 also boosted my confidence that everything was in order," he added.

Najib said he eventually decided to close all his bank accounts after King Abdullah died on Jan 23, 2015 because he knew there would not be any more funds coming in.

"It was a private arrangement between me and him, so when he died, I considered it to be the end of the funds too," he said.

On the millions of ringgit which flowed from SRC International's account to companies like Permai Binaraya Sdn Bhd (PBSB) and Putra Perdana Construction (PPC), before ending up in his own accounts, Najib said he was never informed of it.

"I would never have accepted the money if I knew where it was from.

"It just does not make sense and it would have been crazy of me to happily take money which originated from a Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOF Inc) company... to willingly have it banked into my personal bank accounts, of all things," he added.

Najib said he had always believed that whatever cheques he issued were to utilise funds which had been given to him legally.

"I must stress again that I never knew the real source of the funds... that they were from SRC International, and I was never involved in transferring money out of the company," he said.

Touching on Low's involvement in the management of his bank accounts, Najib said he was unaware that the financier had been dealing with his bankers at AmBank, as he had never authorised the latter to do so.

"I am shocked about this.

"I just don't know how or why the bank had dealt with someone who was never authorised to act on my behalf."

On his bank statements, Najib said he believed these were kept by his former private secretary, the late Datuk Azlin Alias.

However, he said only during the course of the trial did he discover that Low had made arrangements to ensure that the statements would never reach him.

Najib said he was also unaware that his bank accounts were constantly overdrawn and that is why he kept issuing cheques for various purposes.

"Azlin always told me that there were adequate funds in the accounts... otherwise, I would never have issued the cheques.

"Almost all those who received the cheques were either Barisan Nasional component parties, Umno, welfare bodies or contractors who had been engaged for corporate social responsibility programmes.

"It would have been very embarrassing for me if the cheques which I issued bounced... I would never have taken such a risk."

Najib said he had also never asked Low to top up his accounts whenever there were inadequate funds in them.

On the RM12 million which had been transferred into his accounts by Low, and a warning issued by AmBank that his accounts were being red flagged due to numerous instances of being overdrawn, Najib said he was unaware of it.

"I would never have allowed it to happen. I was then the prime minister and a known politician in the country.

"The opposition politicians would have had a field day if word ever got out that my accounts were red flagged by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) because of the RM12 million... it would have ruined my reputation.

"I pray the court will consider how irrational this whole thing is... I really did not know about it," he added.

Najib said no one, including BNM, ever alerted him about the red flags or the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) warnings on his bank accounts then.

He said AmBank was subsequently fined for compliance failures, noting that he would have been alerted if the bank had played its part.

9. Dr Mahathir hopeful of 1MDB settlement with Goldman soon



Tun Dr Mahathir said they have demanded US\$7.5 billion from Goldman and negotiations were ongoing.

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is hopeful of reaching an out-of-court settlement with Goldman Sachs over the 1MDB scandal soon, but that compensation of "one point something billion" dollars offered by the bank was too small.

Malaysia has charged Goldman and 17 current and former directors of its units for allegedly misleading investors over bond sales totalling US\$6.5 billion that the US bank helped raise for sovereign wealth fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

Mahathir said they have demanded US\$7.5 billion from Goldman and negotiations were ongoing.

"We would like to avoid having to go to the courts, but if they come up with a reasonable sum I think we will agree," Dr Mahathir said in an interview with Reuters on Tuesday.

"But at the moment their offer is too small. We're continuing to talk with them to explain why they should pay what we demand. Of course it's not the full amount, that they may be able to bring down, but we think that we can reach some agreement at a later stage."

A spokesman for Goldman declined comment.

Dr Mahathir said he hoped an agreement with Goldman would be reached "soon."

"Yes, I want to achieve a settlement. We are progressing, if we fail then we'll go to the courts," he said. "We cannot preempt by going to the courts."

Goldman said in October it was in discussions with authorities on a possible resolution of investigations relating to 1MDB.

The bank could separately end up paying less than US\$2 billion to US authorities to resolve criminal and regulatory probes connected to the scandal, Bloomberg reported last week.

US authorities say about US\$4.5 billion was siphoned from 1MDB, founded in 2009 by then-Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak. The scandal helped Dr Mahathir unexpectedly defeat Najib in a general election last year.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would not agree to a settlement with fugitive financier Jho Low, accused of playing a central role in the scam. Low has consistently denied wrongdoing and says he does not expect a fair trial in Malaysia as long as Dr Mahathir is in power.

"We think he is very guilty. We have proof of that," Dr Mahathir said of Low. "We want to settle it according to the law.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysian authorities have no contact with Low or his representatives and did not know where he is.

The US Justice Department said last month it struck a deal to recover US\$1 billion in funds allegedly looted from 1MDB from Low.

10. Najib files suit against AmBank, former staff for mismanaging his accounts



Datuk Seri Najib Razak has filed a lawsuit against AmBank Islamic Berhad and its former relation manager Joanna Yu Ging Ping (inset) for alleged mismanagement of the former's bank accounts which are being scrutinised in the ongoing SRC International Sdn Bhd corruption hearing

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak has filed a lawsuit against AmBank Islamic Berhad and its former relation manager Joanna Yu Ging Ping for alleged mismanagement of the former's bank accounts which are being scrutinised in the ongoing SRC International Sdn Bhd corruption hearing.

Najib, through Messrs Shafee & Co, had filed the suit yesterday at the High Court and named Ambank, AMMB Holdings Berhad and Yu as the defendants.

Najib in his statement of claim said AmBank and Yu had committed negligence when handling his bank accounts (ending 694, 880, 898, and 906) by disclosing it to fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho or Jho Low.

"The defendants without authorised had disclosed defendant's bank statements, debit and credit remittance transactions, and balances of funds of account 694 to Low as the third party.

"The defendants also did not engage with Najib directly to report on Low's action regarding the said bank account.

"The bank also had facilitated unauthorised third party to make money transfers between accounts - 880, 898, and 906," he said in a statement.

The former prime minister also claimed he had been kept in the dark on the details of his own bank accounts statements and other related documents by the bank under Low's instruction.

"Low, with the help of other unauthorised third parties, had made 20 transactions to regularise the accounts totalling RM12 million through several local and foreign remittances of funds," he said, adding that the accounts had been 'red flagged' by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM).

He said the defendants failed to report and get direct instructions from the plaintiff despite the accounts being red flagged.

"The plaintiff only discovered the act committed by the defendants only during the SRC trial after the prosecution had revealed the conversations between Yu and the third parties."

The Pekan Member of Parliament is seeking for special, general, aggravated, and exemplary damages from the defendants without stating the specific amounts.

Najib, 66, is facing charges of criminal breach of trust, abuse of power and money laundering involving RM42 million of SRC International funds.

He faces 20 years' jail and fine for the offences.

On Nov 1, High Court judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali ordered Najib to defence himself on all seven charges after the prosecution had successfully established a prima facie case against him.

11. AG to Najib: 'The money is not going to come back from the heavens, Datuk Seri



Najib is accused of committing three counts of criminal breach of trust and one count of abuse of power involving RM42 million of SRC International funds.

KUALA LUMPUR: Things got heated in the High Court today when Attorney General Tan Sri Tommy Thomas accused Datuk Seri Najib Razak of doing nothing to recover RM4 billion which had been squandered by SRC International Bhd.

Both of them were engaged in a terse exchange, with Thomas at one point mocking the former prime minister by saying "you did nothing!....it was the taxpayers money...the money is not going to come back from the heavens, Datuk Seri", prompting Najib to shoot back by saying "that is not true".

The courtroom drama began towards the tail end of Thomas' cross-examination when he started questioning Najib over the RM4 billion loan to SRC International for which the government had ended up as guarantor.

He asked the former prime minister about SRC International's financial situation in 2017 and what steps had been taken to address the situation.

Najib, who also held the Finance Minister portfolio at that time, kept repeating that he had fulfilled his responsibility by asking the SRC International management to investigate.

However, Thomas insisted that Najib had done nothing, prompting the latter to reply in an agitated voice that he had indeed done something.

Thomas then suggested that the RM4 billion given to SRC International had all but disappeared but Najib disagreed.

"It is totally wrong...I asked SRC International to do it (take action)," he said in a raised voice.

Thomas then asked the 66-year-old Pekan member of parliament if he had ever summoned the five SRC International directors to find out what had happened to the money but he replied in the negative.

Thomas: This was not SRC International's money...it was taxpayers' money, but you did nothing to find out what happened

Najib: SRC International was supposed to do it

Thomas: So you did nothing...the money is not going to come back from the heavens, Datuk Seri

Najib: That is not true. I agree that nothing came back but that does not mean the money is not there.

Thomas: Is SRC International insolvent

Najib: It has serious cash flow problems but I disagree that it is insolvent.

Thomas: I put it to you that the RM4 billion has all but disappeared.

Najib: I disagree

Thomas: The RM4 billion was misspent and has dissipated.

Najib: I disagree...I too want to find out the truth.

Earlier, Thomas also questioned Najib about his refusal to allow former Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah from flying to Switzerland to find out why SRC International's money had been frozen.

Thomas suggested that Najib had prevented Husni from going there because he was afraid that his deputy may find out the real story.

Thomas: You did not want the cover from being blown if Husni had gone to Switzerland only to find out the truth.

Najib: That is not true...SRC International was already working on it.

The trial will continue next Wednesday and lead prosecutor Datuk V Sithambaram is expected to continue with the cross-examination.

Najib is accused of committing three counts of criminal breach of trust and one count of abuse of power involving RM42 million of SRC International funds.

He is also facing three money laundering charges over the same funds. He faces up to 20 years jail, if convicted.

12. Baling MP's trial to start in March



Baling Member of Parliament Datuk Seri Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim was present at the Kuala Lumpur High Court for mention of RM 5.2 million case involving road project and money laundering of nearly RM 140 million

KUALA LUMPUR: The corruption trial involving Baling member of parliament Datuk Seri Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim and his brother Datuk Abdul Latiff is set to commence in March next year.

Sessions Court judge Azura Alwi has fixed 13 days for the trial which would be held from March 16 to 20; April 1 to 3, May 18 to 20, and June 29 to 30.

She fixed the dates during case mention today.

Earlier, deputy public prosecutor Adam Mohamed said the prosecution would call about 30 witnesses to testify in the proceedings.

On Jan 16, Abdul Azeez, 52, represented by Hisyam Teh Poh Teik, pleaded not guilty to accepting bribes totalling RM5.2 million in connection with some road projects, and nine counts of money laundering involving nearly RM140 million.

Abdul Azeez allegedly committed the corruption offences at the CIMB Bank, UAB Tower branch, No. 6, Jalan Tun Perak here on Dec 8, 2010 and at Affin Bank Bhd, J-03-G, Block J, Setiawalk, Persiaran Wawasan, Pusat Bandar Puchong, Petaling, Selangor, on June 13, 2017, and April 10 last year.

On charges of money laundering, he allegedly committed the offences around the Klang Valley between March 8, 2010, and Aug 30 last year.

The three charges of corruption are framed under Section 16(a)(A) of the MACC Act 2009 while the nine charges, under Section 4(1)(b) of the Anti Money Laundering, Anti Terrorism Financing, and Proceeds from Unlawful Activities Act 2001 (AMLTFPUAA).

Meanwhile, Abdul Latif, 61, stands accused of two charges of abetting Abdul Azeez who allegedly received RM4 million in cash from one Mohammad Redzuan as gratification to help Syarikat Menuju Asas Sdn Bhd secure a road project through limited tender from the Works Ministry.

The project involved the Pantai Baru Coastal Expressway: Upgrading Works of Federal Road FT005 (Teluk Intan to Kampung Lekir, Perak) worth RM644,480,000.

Both offences were allegedly committed at Affin Bank Bhd, J-03-G, Block J, Setiawalk, Persiaran Wawasan, Pusat Bandar Puchong, Petaling, Selangor between June 13, 2017 and April 10, last year.

The charges are under Section 16(a)(A) and Section 28(1)(c) of the MACC Act 2009.

13. Malaysia approves four manufacturing projects worth RM5.4b



KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia approved four projects in the manufacturing sector worth RM5.4 billion on December 12.

The projects will be located in Sabah, Johor, Selangor and Pulau Pinang.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Darell Leiking said one of the approved projects was an investment worth RM2 billion by a multinational glass manufacturer to produce float glass and photovoltaic functional glass at the Kota Kinabalu Industrial Park.

This investment is expected to create over 1,000 job opportunities, whereby 80 per cent will be Malaysians, he added.

"We look forward to attract more investments in the near future. For the first nine months of 2019, Malaysia recorded RM149 billion worth of approved investments in the services, manufacturing and primary sectors," he said in a statement.

Leiking said this was 4.4 per cent higher than the RM142.6 billion approved in the same period last year.

He said these investments involved 4,025 projects and will create an additional of 93,841 job opportunities.

Notably, approved investments for global establishments saw an increase of 185.7 per cent during the period, he added.

Leiking said the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) has secured 126 projects proposing to make Malaysia the Principal Hubs, regional offices or representative offices.

"These activities are expected to create job opportunities for 884 knowledge-based or highly technical skilled workers.

"These projects will also position Malaysia on course for greater integration into the global supply chain," he said.

The Cabinet has empowered National Committee on Investment (NCI) as the sole approving committee for investments.

MITI and Finance Ministry co-chair the committee which deliberates and make decisions on investment projects received by all investment promotion agencies including MIDA, Regional Corridors, Halal Development Corp (HDC), Malaysia Digital Economy Corp (MDEC), BioEconomy Corp and the Ministry of Agriculture.

14. Najib allowed to inspect documents provided by Justo



Datuk Seri Najib Razak will get to inspect the 17,000 documents surrendered by Xavier Andre Justo to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) during investigations into the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scanda

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak will get to inspect the 17,000 documents surrendered by Xavier Andre Justo to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) during investigations into the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal.

High Court judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah allowed the former prime minister's application today.

However, he ruled Najib could only inspect the documents which were stored in a thumbdrive but not obtain it.

Najib had made an application to inspect and obtain the documents surrendered by the 1MDB whistle-blower and former PetroSaudi International Ltd director to the MACC as part of the 1MDB investigations.

The application was in relation to Najib's corruption trial involving RM2.3 billion of 1MDB funds.

Sequerah in his decision said he found that the documents were relevant to Najib's defence in the ongoing 1MDB trial.

"I find that there is sufficient basis that the documents are relevant to the applicant (Najib) and his defence.

"It will not be a 'fishing expedition' as Najib's defence team has sufficiently identified and categorised the documents that they need," he said.

The judge said in regards with Section 124 of the Evidence Act, the respondent's (prosecution) privilege claim could be reviewed by the court, which means that the matter was not considered conclusive.

He said the court did not find anything to substantiate that public interest might suffer from disclosure of the materials.

MACC Deputy Chief Commissioner (Operation) Datuk Seri Azam Baki had affirmed an affidavit stating that the documents were received in official confidence and protected under Section 124 of Evidence Act.

Sequerah then asked the prosecution to furnish the documents to the defence for inspection within three weeks.

Deputy public prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram then informed the court that he would hand over the 17,000 documents in total to the defence in a thumbdrive.

Earlier, Najib's counsel Al-Firdaus Shahrul Naing submitted that the documents were relevant to the defence's case as it was linked to the charges faced by Najib.

"The documents are linked to the charges and facts which the prosecution intends to prove and the defence of my client," he said.

In the application, Najib sought a court order to compel the prosecution or other entities that have the custody, care and control of the documents that Justo surrendered to the MACC in relation to 1MDB's joint venture with PetroSaudi International Ltd, either in its physical form or as retrieved from a digital storage device, for his inspection.

The trial continues on Jan 13 next year.

Najib, 66, is facing four charges of having used his position to obtain gratification totalling RM2.3 billion in 1MDB funds and 21 counts of money laundering involving the same money.

15. Criminal charges against Goldman Sachs, Asian entities to be heard in High Court



FILE Photo: The criminal charges against Goldman Sachs and its Asian entities relating to the issuance of US\$6.5 billion bonds to 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) will be heard in the High Court

KUALA LUMPUR: The criminal charges against Goldman Sachs and its Asian entities relating to the issuance of US\$6.5 billion bonds to 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) will be heard in the High Court.

Judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan made the ruling after he allowed the prosecution's application to transfer the cases from the Magistrate's Court today.

Goldman Sachs International, its two entities - Goldman Sachs (Asia) LLC and Goldman Sachs (Singapore) Pte - fugitives former 1MDB general counsel Loo Ai Swan and businessman Low Taek Jho, and former banker Tim Leissner were charged with the issuance of the US\$6.5 billion bonds to 1MDB's independent power plant purchases, Tun Razak Exchange and Bandar Malaysia projects.

On Oct 22, deputy public prosecutor Norinna Bahadun applied to transfer the cases against Goldman Sachs International and Goldman Sachs (Asia) LLC to be tried in the High Court.

Counsel Hisyam Teh Poh Teik representing Goldman Sachs and Goldman Sachs (Asia) LLC did not object the applications.

He said the case only alleged his clients of being arrangers for the bonds.

Meanwhile, deputy public prosecutor Zaki Asyraf Zubir said the charges against Goldman Sachs (Singapore) Pte were still under process at the magistrate's court.

"We are still preparing the notice of summons against them and we need another date before this court for hearing to transfer the case," he said.

The court then fixed Dec 26 for hearing.

16. Court vacates Najib and Irwan's CBT trial dates for January and February next year



Former Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Razak attend SRC scandal prosiding at Kuala Lumpur High Court.

KUALA LUMPUR: The criminal breach of trust (CBT) trial of Datuk Seri Najib Razak and former treasury secretary-general Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah involving RM6.6 billion of government funds which was scheduled to start on Jan 6 next year has been postponed.

High Court judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali vacated the trial dates for January and February, 2020, to make way for the former prime minister's ongoing SRC International Sdn Bhd trial which has entered the defence stage.

However, the dates in March and April were maintained. Nazlan, who is presiding both of Najib's cases, fixed Feb 27 for case management.

Earlier, deputy public prosecutor Datuk Jamil Aripin asked for the trial dates to be taken off to give priority to Najib's SRC International trial.

"The hearing of this case is only to proceed upon completion of the SRC International trial," he said, adding that the case involving payment to International Petroleum Investment Company (IPIC) at a London High Court should proceed first to avoid duplication of the case.

Najib, 66, and Irwan, 62, are facing six CBT charges involving RM6.6 billion of government funds in their capacity as Finance Minister and Treasury secretary-general respectively.

Three of the duo's charges were in relation to the payment due to IPIC.

17. Najib: I didn't know because I was busy taking care of the whole country



Former Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Razak attend SRC scandal prosiding at Kuala Lumpur High Court.

KUALA LUMPUR: "I didn't know because I was busy looking after the whole country. Can you accept that?" Datuk Seri Najib Razak said in justifying his ignorance over the goings-on in SRC International Bhd and also the management of his private banking accounts.

The former prime minister and finance minister said this when he was questioned about huge sums of SRC International money which had gone in and out of his bank accounts.

Najib's reply asking whether his answer was acceptable solicited an immediate response from lead prosecutor Datuk V. Sithambaram who said in a tongue-in-cheek fashion: "I better not respond to your question as my reply will not be flattering. We all have a view on it (on how the country was being run)."

Earlier, Sithambaram also took another dig at Najib when the 66-year-old Pekan member of parliament kept insisting that signatures on certain documents, which had been tendered as evidence, may not be his.

The DPP quipped that Najib's answers were akin to what had been said in a famous trial previously where the accused had insisted that the person in an infamous sex-video clip "looked like him and sounded like him but was not him".

The remark caused even Najib to break out in a smile.

It happened when Sithambaram asked Najib if one of the particular documents he was referring to contained the latter's name and signature.

Najib: It looks like my signature but I have my doubts.

Sithambaram: Whenever you say that, it reminds me of a previous, famous case of "looks like me, sounds like me but it is not me".

The hearing today was centred on the prosecution cross-examining Najib on his signatures on contentious documents which the latter is now claiming may have been forged.

Najib argued that he cannot be held responsible if any wrongdoing had been committed in the management of his private bank accounts as he had never sanctioned such things.

He insisted that he had delegated the management of his banking accounts to his private secretary.

He did not budge from this stance despite being pressed on the logic of his answers.

"If something wrong was committed how can I be held responsible?" he kept saying when Sithambaram repeatedly asked Najib whether he was personally responsible for his own banking transactions.

At one point, an exasperated Sithambaram hit out at Najib by saying: "It looks like you are responsible for nothing."

Najib remained unfazed by the sarcasm and replied: "If someone does something not right, how can I be held responsible? There are things they did that I am not aware of."

Asked if he had ever disputed his signatures when the documents were shown to him by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), when they recorded his statement, Najib said he did not.

Sithambaram then said it was obvious that Najib was making an issue of it now as an afterthought.

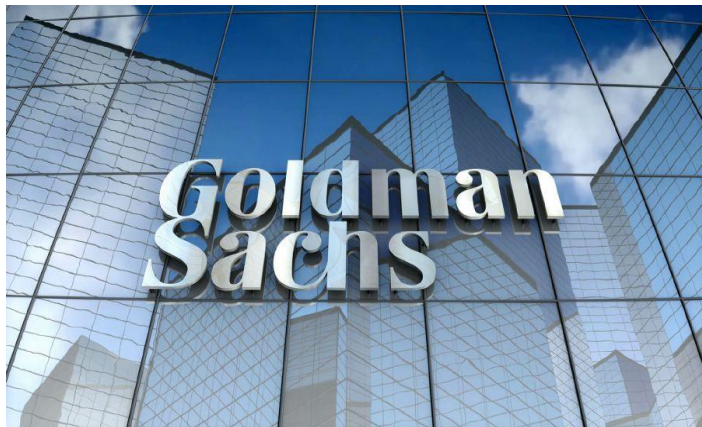
However, Najib denied it and said he only realised his signatures may have been forged during the course of the trial.

Sithambaram will continue cross-examining Najib tomorrow.

Najib is accused of committing three counts of criminal breach of trust and one count of abuse of power involving RM42 million of SRC International funds.

He is also facing three money laundering charges over the same funds. He faces up to 20 years' jail, if convicted.

18. Case mention of Goldman Sachs entity set on Jan 14



The case against Goldman Sachs (Singapore) Pte relating to the issuance of USD\$6.5 billion bonds to 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) will be mentioned on Jan 14 next year.

KUALA LUMPUR: The case against Goldman Sachs (Singapore) Pte relating to the issuance of US\$6.5 billion bonds to 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) will be mentioned on Jan 14 next year.

Deputy public prosecutor Zaki Asyraf Zubir said the date was fixed by the High Court today after he informed the judge that the notice of summons against the entity is still in process.

"We will update on the status of the service of summons when the case comes up for mention on Jan 14," he said after the matter came up before judge Zaini Mazlan in chambers today.

Goldman Sachs International, its two entities - Goldman Sachs (Asia) LLC and Goldman Sachs (Singapore) - fugitives former 1MDB general counsel Loo Ai Swan and businessman Low Taek Jho, and former banker Tim Leissner were charged with the issuance of the US\$6.5 billion bonds to 1MDB's independent power plant purchases, Tun Razak Exchange and Bandar Malaysia projects.

The criminal charges against them were transferred from the Magistrate's Court to the High Court on Dec 16, after Zaini allowed the prosecution's application for the transfer.

Counsels Datuk Prem Ramachandran and Krishna Dallumah appeared for Goldman Sachs (Singapore).

19. Govt appeals against dismissal of application to forfeit 1MDB-linked money seized from Kedah Umno, Habib Jewels



KUALA LUMPUR: The government has filed an appeal against the High Court's decision dismissing the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) bid to forfeit RM1.15 million that was seized from Kedah Umno Liaison Committee and Habib Jewels Sdn Bhd.

The money seized by the commission from the two entities purportedly originated from sovereign wealth fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

Deputy public prosecutor Abdul Rashid Sulaiman said a notice of appeal had been filed by the prosecution at the Court of Appeal on Dec 16.

He said the prosecution had also applied for postponement of the execution of the order for the return of the RM1.15 million to the respondents (Kedah Umno and Habib Jewels).

"The court has ordered for Kedah Umno to file an affidavit in reply to the prosecution's application for stay of the order by Jan 7 and Habib Jewels is given until Jan 14 to do the same," he said after the matter came up for case management before deputy registrar Mahyudin Mohmad Som today.

He added that the court had also fixed Jan 7 for case management.

On Dec 13, the High Court booted out MACC's forfeiture suit against the two entities on grounds that the money could not be part of the RM15 million given by former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to the party between 2012 and 2013.

Kedah Umno and Habib Jewels were accused of receiving the money via cheques issued by Najib amounting to RM1.05 million and RM100,000 respectively.

20. Ex-UPSI vice-chancellor escapes jail time for power abuse



Judge S. Indera Nehru judgement came about after the prosecution failed to prove a prima facie case against Prof Datuk Dr Zakaria Kasa

IPOH: A former Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) vice-chancellor walked free today after he was acquitted and discharged by the Sessions Court here of abusing his power by including his son's name in a list of job interviewees at the university five years ago.

Judge S. Indera Nehru judgement came about after the prosecution failed to prove a prima facie case against Prof Datuk Dr Zakaria Kasa.

The 62-year-old - who was an officer of a public body - was accused of using his position to instruct the university's registrar to include his son, Mohd Fauzi, as a candidate to be interviewed on Sept 12, 2014.

Zakaria was accused of committing the offence between June 24, 2014 and Sept 12, 2014 at the university's vice-chancellor room between 9am and noon.

The charge was framed under Section 23 of the MACC Act 2009, and punishable under Section 24 of the same Act.

If convicted, he would have faced a jail term of up to 20 years and a fine of not less than five times the sum or value of the gratification which is the subject matter of the offence, where such gratification is capable of being valued, or is of a pecuniary nature, or RM10,000, whichever is higher.

Deputy public prosecutor Nurul Wahida Jalaluddin prosecuted, while Zakaria was represented by lawyers Shahidah Muslimah Roslan, Noor Hidayah Mohd Saad and Mohd Khairul Fairuz Rahman.