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1. Rosmah's corruption trial begins Feb 3



Former Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (left) and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, will make an appearance at separate High Courts here on Monday for their criminal trials

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 1 -- Former Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, will make an appearance at separate High Courts here on Monday for their criminal trials.

As for Rosmah, 69, it will be the first day of her corruption trial in connection with the supply and installation of solar energy at 369 rural schools in Sarawa, which is before Judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan, while Najib, 67, is scheduled to continue his defence before Judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali for misappropriating RM42 million in SRC International Sdn Bhd funds.

Rosmah's case will begin at 2 pm, while Najib's trial to start at 9 am.

Rosmah is facing three counts of corruption involving hundreds of millions of ringgit.

A source said the prosecution will call about 25 witnesses, with two of them are expected to take the stand on Monday after the prosecution read out its opening statement.

Rosmah, was initially supposed to be tried with her former special officer, Datuk Rizal Mansor, who was charged with four counts of soliciting and receiving bribes on behalf of Rosmah over the project.

However, last Jan 8, the court acquitted Rizal of the charges after the prosecution withdrew all four charges against him.

On Nov 15, 2018, Rosmah pleaded not guilty in the Sessions Court here to two counts of soliciting RM187.5 million and receiving RM1.5 million for projects to provide solar energy to rural schools in Sarawak.

On the first count, she was charged with dishonestly soliciting for herself , made through Rizal, a gratification, to the amount of RM187,500,000, which is 15 per cent of the value of the contract for the project, from Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd managing director Saidi Abang Samsudin.

It was as an inducement to help the company (Jepak Holdings) to secure the Hybrid Photovoltaic Solar System Integrated Project and Maintenance and Operation of Genset/Diesel for 369 rural schools in Sarawak, worth RM1.25 billion through direct negotiation from the Education Ministry.

She was charged with committing the offence at Lygon Cafe', G-24, Ground Floor, Sunway Putra Mall, 100, Jalan Putra, Chow Kit, here between March and April 2016.

On the second count, Rosmah was charged with dishonestly receiving for herself RM1,500,000 from Saidi for the same purpose at No. 11, Jalan Langgak Duta, Taman Duta, here on Sept 7, 2017.

She was charged under Section 16(a)(A) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act (MACC), and faced an imprisonment for up to 20 years and fine of not less than five times the amount of the gratification of RM10,000, whichever is higher, upon conviction.

On April 10, 2019, Rosmah was charged again in the Sessions Court here with accepting gratification of RM5 million from Saidi through Rizal for helping Jepak Holdings to secure the same project at the same place in Jalan Langgak Duta.

All the cases had been transferred from the Sessions Court to the High Court for trial.

Rosmah is also facing 12 charges for money laundering involving RM7,097,750 and five counts of failing to declare her income to the Inland Revenue Board (IRB). This brings the total number of charges against her to 20.

The case has been fixed for trial in May this year.

2. Najib takes a swipe at current govt, maintains he is not stupid



Former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak meeting his supporters before continuing with the afternoon session of the money laundering and criminal breach of trust case involving RM42 million of SRC International funds.

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak today defended his decision to sack two of his former cabinet ministers and also maintained that he was not that stupid to have stolen money banked into his personal accounts.

The Pekan member of parliament made it a point to state that the current Prime Minister, too, had removed many ministers.

He said this without outrightly mentioning Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's name when making the point.

Najib broached the subject when he was asked about Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal's sacking from the cabinet at the height of the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal.

His lawyer Farhan Read had asked him to explain why he sacked Muhyiddin - who was then the deputy prime minister, and Shafie - who was then Rural and Regional Development minister.

Najib said he did not sack them due to their opposition on how he was handling the SRC International Berhad and 1MDB controversies but because they were publicly condemning how the issues were being handled.

"If you are a cabinet member, you are bound by the principle of collective responsibility.

"This does not mean you cannot disagree but the disagreement should be confined within the cabinet.

"Cabinet discussions are subject to the Official Secrets Act (OSA). Both of them were removed because they failed to abide by this," he said.

Najib then pointed out that even the current prime minister had removed many more ministers in the past than him.

He said it was important to show that there was unity in the cabinet to avoid problems.

"Can you imagine how problematic it can become when the prime minister says one thing and the ministers contradict him like what is happening now," he said.

It was reported Muhyiddin and Shafie were removed from the cabinet in 2015 after both of them started to openly criticise 1MDB.

Meanwhile, when asked about SRC International's money which ended in his account, Najib said it was ludicrous to suggest that he had siphoned money from Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOF inc) into his own account.

"If I wanted to cheat, I would have been a stupid person to put it into my personal account.

"I may not be the most intelligent person but I am not so stupid as to put stolen money into my personal account," he said.

Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah is expected to continue with the re-examination before High Court judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali tomorrow.

The 66-year-old former prime minister is accused of money laundering and criminal breach of trust involving RM42 million of SRC International funds.

3. Fiery start as prosecution accused of character assassinating Rosmah

KUALA LUMPUR: The corruption trial involving Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor got off to a fiery start with her lawyer accusing the prosecution of character assassinating his client even before any evidence had been presented against her.

Rosmah's lawyer Datuk Jagjit Singh said it was unbecoming of the prosecution to label his client with remarks about her character in their opening statement just for the sake of seeking adverse publicity in the media.

"I wish to object to some of the terms they have used in the opening statement against Rosmah,

"An opening statement is not a license to defame a person. It should be confined to the nature of the offence and used to lay down the facts of the case," he said immediately after lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram had finished reading the document.

However, Sri Ram countered by saying that it was important for the prosecution to show Rosmah's role in the corruption case she was facing.

He said the prosecution needed to explain how it planned to present its case and denied any malice in the contents of the opening statement.

"There is no character assassination. The conduct of the accused must be established right from the beginning," he said.

Judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan later ruled that he had no intention to dictate how the prosecution should conduct their case and shot down Jagjit's request for some words describing Rosmah's character in the opening statement to be expunged.

"I don't want to jump the gun at this stage," he said.

Earlier, Sri Ram started his case by stating that Rosmah was the wife of former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

"By herself, she occupied no official position. However, she wielded considerable influence because of her overbearing nature.

"She placed herself in a position where she was able to influence decisions in the public sector," he said.

Sri Ram said the prosecution will show how the accused used her influence to obtain a project to provide solar energy to 369 rural schools in Sarawak in return for a bribe.

Rosmah, 69, is facing three counts of soliciting RM187.5 million and receiving a bribe of RM6.5 million from Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd managing director Saidi Abang Samsudin, through her former aide, Datuk Rizal Mansor for projects to provide solar energy to 369 rural schools in Sarawak.

Sri Ram said the prosecution will adduce direct and circumstantial evidence to show the active role played by Rosmah to obtain the project for Jepak Holdings.

He painted a picture on how Saidi had initially sought the contract by approaching the then Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid but it was rejected.

After an unfruitful attempt with the minister, Sri Ram said Saidi had approached one Aazmey Abu Talib, who is Najib's friend.

"With Aazmey's help, Saidi managed to get a minute from Najib to support his application to obtain the contract but this did not help speed up matters with the Ministry of Education.

"They then turned to the accused whom they managed to contact through Rizal," he said.

Rizal then arranged a meeting at Rosmah's house at Jalan Langgak Duta between January and April 2016 where a large sum of money was offered to the accused in return for her help to secure the project.

"An offer of a political donation was also made to the accused's husband as a gesture of gratitude for supporting the application.

"It is important to note that the accused did not hold any position of responsibility in any political party at that time," he said.

Sri Ram said it was clear that the accused knew that the so-called "political donation" was meant as a bribe for her.

"The payment was contingent on her using her influence to obtain the solar hybrid contract for Saidi's company," he said.

Sri Ram said the prosecution will also show that Rosmah had in December 2016 received RM5 million in cash which was delivered at her official residence in Putrajaya.

"The solar contract was executed on June 20, 2017. The Ministry of Education then delivered a series of payments to Jepak.

"Later, Saidi delivered RM1.5 million in cash to the accused at her Langgak Duta home on September 7 2017," he said.

The lead prosecutor said after the meeting, Rosmah increased the sum of the 'political donation' to RM187.5 million which works out to 15 per cent of the value of the project which was RM1.25 billion.

He said Rosmah used Rizal to make her demands and to negotiate the bribe that was to be paid to her.

"Initially she wanted 17 per cent of the value of the project which works out to a sum in excess of RM200 million and she agreed to accept 15 per cent upon Rizal's advice," he said.

He said subsequently, a sham agreement was drawn up by one Lawrence Tee to disguise the payment and conceal the name of the real recipient of the money.

Sri Ram said direct and circumstantial evidence will be led to prove that the Rosmah was actuated by a corrupt intention at all material times.



The corruption trial involving Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor got off to a fiery start with her lawyer accusing the prosecution of character assassinating his client even before any evidence had been presented against he

4. Rosmah 'pressured' ex-education minister over award of solar hybrid project for rural schools



A former education minister told the High Court today that he felt pressured by Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor

KUALA LUMPUR: A former education minister told the High Court today that he felt pressured by Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor to award a solar hybrid project for 369 rural schools in Sarawak to Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd.

Datuk Seri Mahdzhir Khalid also explained how he was constantly harassed by the company's managing director Saidi Abang Samsudin and his business partner Rayyan Radzwill Abdullah to expedite the matter.

At times Rosmah who was seated at the dock was seen shaking her head.

Mahdzhir said Rosmah had once showed interest in the project.

"This was during a breaking of fast occasion at the Prime Minister's official residence in Putrajaya.

"Rosmah told me 'look into the project la Cikgu Aazmey. Expedite it.'

"I only replied 'ya, ya'," he said.

Mahdzhir said what he understood from Rosmah's message was that she had instructed him to expedite the approval of the project to Jepak Holdings.

He said this had reaffirmed his belief of Rosmah's involvement in 'Saidi's team' as Saidi had mentioned before.

He said 'Cikgu Aazmey' was Datuk Aazmey Abu Talib who is Pekan Umno division secretary and the Pahang Department of Education director.

The 59-year-old witness said Saidi and Rayyan had also forced him to help but he avoided them.

"They once told me that Rosmah went mad about the delay of the issuance of the 'Letter of Award' to carry out the solar hybrid project to Saidi or Jepak," he said.

Mahdzhir said Rosmah's former aide Datuk Rizal Mansor had also contacted him asking him to expedite the approval papers for the project.

"I understood that he called on behalf of Rosmah as he used the word 'Mem'," he said.

Upon hearing this, Rosmah shook her head again.

Earlier, fourth witness, former personal driver for Saidi revealed how he was instructed by his boss to carry two backpacks filled with cash to the residence of the former prime minister's wife.

Shamsul Rizal Sharbini, 42, laid out details on how he was instructed to put bundles of cash in RM100 denomination into the two bags and place them on a green sofa at the residence in Jalan Langgak Duta here sometime in 2017.

He said he drove Saidi to a Maybank branch in Kuala Lumpur before he was instructed by Saidi to purchase the two back packs.

"At the upper floor of the bank, Saidi instructed me to put bundles of cash in RM100 denominations into the two bags.

"I did not count the cash as my job was just to put them inside the bags," he said.

Shamsul said when he dropped off Saidi at the house, he saw Rosmah's former aide Datuk Rizal Mansor waiting at the door.

He said on a previous occasion, he was also instructed to carry two luggage bags into a building next to the Pavillion Mall where Rizal was waiting at the lobby of the building.

"I recognised Rizal because he always appeared on television and he was often criticised by the opposition, and I know that he was Rosmah's and Najib's aide," he said.

The trial before High Court judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan continues.

Rosmah, is facing three charges of soliciting RM187.5 million and receiving a bribe of 6.5 million from Saidi through Rizal for projects to provide solar energy to 369 rural schools in Sarawak.

The prosecution team is lead by Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram while Rosmah's team is lead by Datuk Jagjit Singh.

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5. Ex-envoy says he was told about Arab 'donation' from Najib



Former Malaysian ambassador to Saudi Arabia Datuk Syed Omar Al Saggaf (left)

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Malaysian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Professor Datuk Syed Omar Al-Saggaf, told the High Court here today that he only learned of the Saudi 'political donation' to Datuk Seri Najib Razak from the former prime minister.

The 76-year-old retiree confirmed that Najib and former Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom had met the late King Abdullah Abdulaziz Al Saud in an unofficial meeting on Jan 11, 2010.

The fourth defence witness said the closed-door meeting was held at King Abdullah's palace a day before Najib's official visit to the gulf country.

Syed Omar described the relationship between King Abdullah and Najib during the meeting as 'very close'.

"Both parties had discussed on several issues such as the Haj pilgrim quota, Arab Spring, and aid from Saudi Arabia to Malaysia.

"King Abdullah during the meeting had pledged his support to the then Malaysian federal government as he was awed by our social harmony.

"The social situation in Saudi Arabia is not that good due to clashes between different sects in the country.

"King Abdullah was also worried that the Arab spring could reach Asia," he said during the examination-in-chief by Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah today.

Syed Omar said King Abdullah, Najib, and Jamil Khir had isolated themselves and went to middle of the room after the meeting ended.

"They talked in private and all of them looked very focus in their discussion... I do not know what they discussed.

"After the meeting, I was told that King Abdullah decided to give a donation to Najib for his disposal in the 2013 general election," he said.

When cross examined by lead prosecutor Datuk V. Sithambaram, Syed Omar said it was Najib who told him that.

"Najib told me about it after the meeting... I did not hear it from King Abdullah himself," he said, adding that he also had no information on the £50 million donation from King Abdullah to Najib six years ago.

Sithambaram: Do you know how much 'donation' Najib received from Saudi royalty?

Syed Omar: I have no idea.

Sithambaram: In 2014, King Abdullah in a letter said they want to donate £50 million to Najib but the latter only received £10 millions instead. Why is that?

Syed Omar: I do not know.

Sithambaram: I put it to you that if the then prime minister received donations for election purposes, that it is the interference of the government.

Syed Omar: I have no idea.

Sithambaram: This money given by King Abdullah, is to assist Najib to win the general election.

Syed Omar: This was told to me by Najib, not by the palace.

Meanwhile, Shafee had informed the court that they would file an application to look into several statement of witnesses interviewed by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) during the investigation of SRC International Sdn Bhd corruption scandal.

"We will file this tomorrow morning as this is vital to our part especially the statement of SRC International former chief executive officer Nik Faisal Ariff Kamil," he said.

The 66-year-old former prime minister is accused of money laundering and criminal breach of trust involving RM42 million of SRC International funds.

He faces 20 years' jail if found guilty of the offences.

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6. When companies are designed to fail



AirAsia Group CEO Tan Sri Tony Fernandes and chairman Datuk Kamarudin Meranun have stepped aside from their executive roles for at least two months, even as the authorities investigate allegations that Airbus paid a bribe of US\$50 million to win plane orders from the company

AIRASIA Group CEO Tan Sri Tony Fernandes and chairman Datuk Kamarudin Meranun have stepped aside from their executive roles for at least two months, even as the authorities investigate allegations that Airbus paid a bribe of US\$50 million to win plane orders from the company.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission took prompt action to start its own investigation. The most important thing is to get full cooperation from the United Kingdom authorities and to record statements from witnesses overseas.

The MACC Act 2009 empowers the commission to investigate any allegation of corruption against any Malaysian citizen or permanent resident outside the country. The Attorney-General's Chambers has the power to charge individuals who commit acts of corruption overseas.

Under the deferred prosecution agreement (DPA) practised in the UK (and also in Singapore), a corporation may have a charge deferred, on condition it agrees to pay a financial penalty and abide by several conditions, including supervision of its practices for a period of time.

Under DPA, Airbus is to pay a fine amounting to €991 million over allegations that it had used external consultants to bribe customers into buying its civilian and military aircraft.

Section 17A of the MACC Act 2009, which will come into force on June 1, 2020, imputes corporate liability to commercial organisations for failure to have adequate procedures to prevent corruption.

Most of us would regard the public service as the most corrupt sector. From 2014 to 2018, the MACC nabbed 782 individuals.

The number of arrests in 2019 was 294. The MACC also stated that corruption in the commercial and business sector was becoming more alarming.

The largely hidden truth is that banks play an integral role in enabling corrupt practices.

1Malaysia Development Bhd is a case in point. Sabah's RM115 million "Watergate scandal" speaks volumes about the urgent need to have a strong legal mechanism to deal with corruption in the private sector.

Collusive corruption, where officials from the public sector "join hands" with the private sector, is greatly present in today's business environment, particularly in procurement, construction and development.

In KPMG's 2013 Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Survey, 90 per cent of respondents said bribery and corruption were the biggest problem for businesses in Malaysia. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers Global Economic Crime and Fraud Survey 2018 (Malaysian report), the number of economic crimes experienced by respondents rose significantly.

The 2018 Business Integrity Country Agenda assessment conducted by Transparency International Malaysia found that many companies had failed to implement anti-corruption systems.

The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, in its Report to Nations 2018, stated that any company that did not practise an anti-corruption culture and integrity may suffer a drop in profit of up to five per cent.

Evidently, combating corruption in the private sector is equally as important as tackling it in the public sector. Any action needs to focus on both sectors. In EY Global Fraud Survey 2016, 83 per cent of respondents viewed enforcement against management as an effective deterrent corruption.

Practising a culture of integrity can create a more favourable working environment. Companies must raise the awareness of employees, customers and vendors about the importance of anti-corruption and integrity practices. Identify the problem areas and loopholes for corrupt practices, and find solutions.

A company's culture is dictated by core values, such as honesty and integrity, starting from the top.

Companies should focus on business ethics as these make them stronger, more successful and able to attract and retain good employees. They must also portray a positive brand image, engaging potential or existing customers and give the opportunity to appoint the right business partners and vendors. Without this, any organisation is designed to fail.

7. Najib's administration asked Saudi Arabia for funds to finance 2013 general election



It was Datuk Seri Najib Razak's administration which sought financial aid from the Saudis to finance the 2013 general election

KUALA LUMPUR: It was Datuk Seri Najib Razak's administration which sought financial aid from the Saudis to finance the 2013 general election.

However, this was done without the matter being discussed in Cabinet, the High Court heard today.

Former Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom said the matter was also kept a secret from the public then.

Asked by lead prosecutor Datuk V Sithambaram if the acceptance of money from the Saudis amounted to interference of a foreign country in Malaysian elections, Jamil Khir said he did not agree with such suggestion.

Jamil Khir was testifying as the fifth defence witness in Datuk Seri Najib Razak's SRC International Bhd trial, where the former prime minister is accused of misappropriating RM42 million of the company funds.

He faces 20 years' jail if convicted of the offence.

Earlier in the morning, Jamil Khir testified that the late King Abdullah Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia decided to transfer "political aid" to Najib's personal bank accounts to avoid "complications".

He said King Abdullah made the decision in a private meeting during an unofficial gathering with Malaysian delegates in Riyadh on Jan 11, 2010.

"The private meeting was held after an unofficial meeting, a day before Najib's official visit to the Gulf country.

"He (Najib) signalled to me (after the meeting) to follow him and we went to the middle of the meeting room.

"The meeting is very private as it only involved King Abdullah, his translator, Najib and me," he said when reading his witness statement before judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali.

He said King Abdullah, who conversed in Arabic, promised to transfer aid directly to Najib's account as the former did not know how political organisations spend their money.

"He wanted to ensure that the then federal government could retain power due to its ability to ensure unity among races and to curb Shia ideology (in Malaysia).

"King Abdullah was also worried that the direct transfer of aid into a political organisation would complicate the funds," he said.

Jamil Khir said after the meeting, Najib informed the then Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman and former Malaysian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Professor Datuk Syed Omar Al-Saggaf, about the donation.

However, the Jerai member of parliament said he did not know when the first funds arrived and the amount involved.

Sithambaram: Did we (Malaysian government) ask for the donation from Saudi Arabia or were they the ones who offered it first?

Jamil Khir: We asked for it.

Sithambaram: Was this brought up in the Cabinet?

Jamil Khir: No.

Sithambaram: Why was this important matter (asking donation from foreign country) not discussed in the cabinet?

Jamil Khir: I am not sure.

Jamil Khir also said he was unaware that Najib had returned a portion of the money amounting to RM2.6 billion in August 2013.

The money was returned to Tanore Finance Corporation, an offshore company belonging to the Saudi royal family.

8. Transport Ministry: ECRL is 15pct complete



Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook (2nd-left) listens to an explanation from Malaysia Rail Link (MRL) chief executive officer Datuk Seri Darwis Abd Razak (right) during the visit to Port Klang Authority headquarters. Also present is Port Klang Authority chairman Ean Yong Hian Wah (2nd-left).

PORT KLANG: The shortened East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), which was relaunched last year, has reached a progress rate of 15 per cent.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke said the project is expected to be fully completed by mid-2026 and operational by early 2027.

"Construction work in Section B (Dungun to Temerloh) started last year and is ongoing. Sections A (Kota Baru to Dungun) and C are still in the exhibition stage, but they will not wait for all new exhibitions to be completed.

"Public exhibition is ongoing in Section C (Temerloh to Port Klang), which will end in April.

"Once approval is obtained in the third quarter of this year, construction works on areas not involved in the land acquisition process will begin first. Works on areas that require land acquisition will take time."

Loke was speaking to reporters after attending the ECRL project public inspection site at the Port Klang Authority Headquarters, here, today.

Present were Malaysian Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) chairman Tan Sri Ismail Bakar and MRL chief executive officer Datuk Seri Darwis Abd Razak.

Loke said although land acquisition is needed in certain areas, the authorities will try to avoid residential areas.

"There will be areas where there may be a small number of houses that need to be evacuated. The process of acquiring the land areas falls under the National Land Code. Those affected will be duly compensated.

"The project in Putrajaya and Selangor involves 81 lots and 1,538 lots, respectively. However, this only affects the wider land areas," he said.

Loke said the ECRL would also connect two ports in Port Klang - Westport and Carey Island Port to be built in the future.

In light of the Covid-19 outbreak, he said the ECRL project is not affected and is on schedule as only 13 of the ECRL workers were from China's Hubei province, of which its city, Wuhan, is regarded as the outbreak's epicentre.

"They had returned home for the Chinese New Year and had not returned to Malaysia. They are still on vacation in China since the area is now on lockdown.

"This, however, does not have any impact on the work here. Construction work is largely carried out by local workers," he added.

On April 12, 2019, in Beijing, Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) and China Communications Construction Company Ltd (CCCC) signed a supplementary agreement that resumes the suspended ECRL project, at a lower price.

The new ECRL alignment is now shortened by 40km from 688km to 648km, as it no longer tunnels through the Titiwangsa Main Range that borders Selangor and Pahang.

It starts from Kota Bahru in Kelantan and runs south through Mentakab, Jelebu, Kuala Kelawang, Bangi/Kajang, Putrajaya, and terminating at Port Klang.

The ECRL project cost was slashed to RM44 billion, RM21.5 billion cheaper than its original cost of RM65.5 billion signed on by former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, in October 2016.

9. Mahdzir Khalid denies owning a Gulfstream private jet

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid had to pause for a few seconds before denying that he ever owned a Gulfstream private jet.

The picture of the Gulfstream IV-SP jet with its tail number 1487 was shown in court today but after taking a close look at it Mahdzir denied it belonged to him.

He also pleaded ignorance on who owned the jet between Oct 2011 and Oct 2017 when questioned by lawyer Datuk Jagjit Singh.

However, when asked if he had ever travelled in the plane to places like Alor Star, Kuching, Penang and Macau, Mahdzir said he was not sure.

Mahdzir, who is the fifth prosecution witness in the corruption trial of Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, previously denied he had flown to casinos around the world in a private jet.

Meanwhile, after taking Mahdzir through questions concerning the plane, Jagjit and Rosmah's other counsel Datuk Akberdin Abdul Kader grilled the Umno vice-president about a letter which was sent to the Attorney General's chambers by lawyer Datuk C Vignesh Kumar.

The letter from Mahdzir's lawyer indicated to the AGC that Mahdzir was ready to co-operate with the authorities and that he was willing to testify against the prime mover of the solar panel project case which has landed Rosmah in court.

"It is our humble view that the proposed evidence would further strengthen the case against the prime mover of this case.

"Our client sincerely hopes that he is given the opportunity to assist the authorities in this matter," the law firm had represented to the AGC in the letter.

However, when asked about this today, Mahdzir said he did not hire any lawyer to broker a deal for him.

He also denied that he was out to fix Rosmah to escape graft charges involving the same project.

Asked who was the prime mover mentioned in the letter, Mahdzir, 60, remained silent.

Pressed if the prime mover referred to Rosmah's former personal assistant Datuk Rizal Mansor or Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd managing director Saidi Abang Samsuddin, Mahdzir disagreed it was them.

Later, when re-examined by Deputy Public Prosecutor Ahmad Akram Gharib, Mahdzir said 'prime mover' and 'proposed evidence' in the letter were words used by his lawyer.

Mahdzir was eventually released from the witness stand today but he will be recalled for another round of re-examination by lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram on Monday.

Rosmah is facing three charges of soliciting and receiving bribes to secure the solar hybrid project worth RM1.25 billion for Jepak Holdings.

She is accused of soliciting RM187.5 million from Saidi between January and April 2016 and receiving RM5 million and RM1.5 million in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

The project involves supplying solar hybrid energy to 369 rural schools in Sarawak.

In his testimony last week, Mahdzir said he was pressured to award the project to Jepak Holdings, which had zero experience in solar energy, by the then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Rosmah.

Meanwhile, sixth prosecution witness, former Education Ministry secretary general Tan Sri Dr Madinah Mohamad, also revealed that Rosmah told her to look into and expedite the award of the solar project to Jepak Holdings.

Madinah, 63, said this happened sometime in 2016 when she attended a Permata Negara programme officiated by Rosmah.

"Rosmah had just entered into her car when she suddenly lowered the car window and called me over.

"She then said 'you tengok sikit projek solar Jepak..cepatkan sikit' (you have a look at the solar project for Jepak Holdings...speed it up a little)

"I just answered Insha Allah Datin Seri (God willing Datin Seri)," she said, adding Rizal had also called her about the project before that.

10. Defence witness: King Abdullah offered financial donation, Najib did not ask for it



Datuk Seri Najib Razak attends the trial at the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex.

KUALA LUMPUR: A new twist emerged at Datuk Seri Najib Razak's corruption trial today when a defence witness disputed claims that the former prime minister was seeking financial aid from the Saudis to finance the 2013 general election.

Former foreign minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman when testifying today said it was the late King Abdullah Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia who had offered a financial donation to Najib's administration.

Anifah said Najib also had asked him for his views on receiving the donation via a personal bank account.

It was earlier reported that a former minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, had testified that the Najib's administration had sought financial aid from Saudi Arabia during an official visit to Riyadh.

Jamil Khir, who was the fifth defence witness, said King Abdullah, who conversed in Arabic, promised to transfer the aid directly to Najib's account as the former did not know how a political organisation spent its funds.

Anifah was the sixth defence witness testifying in Najib's SRC International Bhd trial, where the former prime minister is accused of misappropriating RM42 million of the company funds.

In his witness statement, Anifah said the event transpired during an unofficial meeting between Malaysian delegates, led by Najib, and King Abdullah at the latter's palace 10 years ago.



Datuk Seri Anifah Aman testified during the trial today

"The unofficial meeting took place during Najib's official visit to Saudi Arabia which was set between Jan 13 and Jan 16.

"As we were exiting King Abdullah's palace, Najib had sought for clarification from Jamil Khir regarding the confidential dialogue between himself and King Abdullah.

"Najib asked whether he was correct in understanding that King Abdullah preferred the financial donation and monies to be transferred to his (Najib) personal bank account," he said.

Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah during the examination-in-chief then asked Anifah to describe the situation.

Shafee: Can you describe whether the financial assistance from King Abdullah was offered or a request from Najib?

Anifah: From my understanding, it was the King who offered (to provide financial aid)... but this is from my observation.

Anifah said Najib then had asked him for his opinion on the financial donation being transferred to his bank account, to which Anifah assured him that it was acceptable since it would be used for corporate social responsibility and political purposes.

"It has been a common practice in Umno for the president of the party to be personally in charge of most of the political funds.

"King Abdullah was an ardent supporter of Najib as the former was impressed with the Malaysian government's ability to maintain Malaysia as a moderate Muslim country.

"On this basis, the financial aid was meant to consolidate the government's stability further and therefore prevent the unhealthy influence of extremism," he said.



Lawyer Datuk V. Sithambaram.

Later when asked by lead prosecutor Datuk V. Sithambaram on why the donation was carried out without discussions in the Cabinet, Anifah said it was due to the monies being regarded as a 'personal donation'.

Anifah said King Abdullah did not want his contribution to be vaguely disbursed, which may pose some problems.

"Putting the money in the prime minister's account would bring about easier control," he said.

Sithambaram then diverted his questions on the purchase of a luxury watch worth US\$130,625 (RM466,330.11) by Najib for his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, purportedly using monies from the same donation.

Sithambaram: Would it be right to buy a watch worth about half a million?

Anifah: I am shocked by your question.

Sithambaram: Purchased almost RM500,000 watch, would that be right?

Anifah: ... Of course not.

Earlier in the morning, Anifah said King Abdullah had wanted to gift Najib an Arabian stallion but the latter declined.

He said as they were leaving King Abdullah's palace, Najib had observed and admired paintings of Arabian stallions that were in the walkway of the palace.

"He (Najib) commented on the beauty of the Arabian horses and King Abdullah took heed of his comment before he offered the former prime minister one of the many prized stallions in his possession.

"Najib, however, politely declined the offer as he does not ride horses," he said.

The former Kimanis member of parliament said such an offer was a manifestation of the close relations between Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.

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

He faces 20 years' jail if found guilty of the offences.

11. Internal feud almost led to project details being leaked to the Opposition



An internal feud among business partners in the company which was handed a RM1.25 billion contract almost led one of them to expose then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor's roles in awarding the project to Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd.

KUALA LUMPUR: An internal feud among business partners in the company which was handed a RM1.25 billion contract almost led one of them to expose then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor's roles in awarding the project to Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd.

A key witness in Rosmah's corruption trial today revealed that the fallout involved the company managing director Saidi Abang Samsudin and his business partner Rayyan Radzwill Abdullah.

Former Education Ministry secretary general Tan Sri Madinah Mohamad said Rayyan bombarded her with a series of WhatsApp messages between October 2017 and May 2018 expressing his unhappiness with Saidi.

She said Rayyan accused Saidi of changing the contract terms, making false claims and also cheating several other parties of their money by leveraging on the solar hybrid project which the company had won from the government.

Madinah said Rayyan wanted her help to arrange for a meeting with Najib so that he could take over the project from Saidi and Jepak Holdings.

"He threatened to expose the PM and Ma'am...he said he will reveal their involvement in awarding the project to Jepak Holdings.

"He threatened to reveal all this to the Opposition if I did not help him," she said.

Madinah, who is the sixth prosecution witness in the trial, said PM in the message referred to Najib while Rosmah was known as Ma'am in her circles.

The 63-year old who retired from her post in September 2016, said Rayyan also sent her screenshots of incriminating WhatsApp conversations involving Rosmah's former aide Datuk Rizal Mansor.

Rizal was originally a co-accused in the case but charges against him have since been dropped and he is now another key prosecution witness in the trial.

The screenshots were later displayed on a big screen in court, including one where Rizal had engaged in a conversation on how *barang* (goods) should be delivered to a house.



Former Education Ministry secretary general Tan Sri Madinah Mohamad.

A translated portion of the conversation was as follows:

"Saidi is afraid to take the goods himself...And I took the goods to send it to the house.

"The risks I faced included being robbed. If anything had happened...especially with all that goods in my possession...who would have answered for all this?

"Is this the payback I get?"

In another thread dated August 10 and 11 2017, Rizal posted a message that he would be waiting at the boss' house in Taman Duta at 11.30am.

Madinah said she eventually forwarded all the WhatsApp messages to the investigating officer in the case.

Rosmah, 69, is on trial for soliciting and receiving bribes to secure the solar hybrid project worth RM1.25 billion for Jepak Holdings.

She is accused of soliciting RM187.5 million from Saidi between January and April 2016, and receiving RM5 million and RM1.5 million in 2016 and 2017.

The project involves supplying solar hybrid energy to 369 rural schools in Sarawak.

Rosmah is represented by lead counsels Datuk Jagjit Singh and Datuk Akberdin Abdul Kader while the prosecution team is led by Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram and Deputy Public Prosecutor Ahmad Akram Gharib.

Previous witnesses have testified that Saidi had withdrawn RM5 million cash on Dec 19, 2016 and another RM1.5 million on Sept 6, 2017.

One of them, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) assistant superintendent Mohd Redzuan Othaman, had identified locations in the Jalan Langgak Duta home where the money was allegedly handed over to Rosmah.

Meanwhile, another witness, Finance Ministry deputy secretary general (treasury management) Datuk Othman Semail testified that the solar hybrid contract was given to Jepak Holdings without any detailed studies on the need for such a project.

He said the project was given through direct negotiations and did not follow procedures when it was handed to Jepak Holdings on Nov 10, 2016.

The value of the project at RM1.25 billion was also determined by Jepak Holdings without any studies on how the figure was derived, he said.

Othman, 58, said it was also unclear why the contract had been given considering the Education Ministry's limited financial resources and lack of clarity on the necessity for such a project.

12. Najib's trial postponed as witness refuses to be interviewed before taking stand



Datuk Seri Najib Razak arrives at the Kuala Lumpur Courts Complex ahead of the trial

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court has set next Monday to hear an application by Datuk Seri Najib Razak's lawyers' on whether they can interview a Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) investigating officer (IO) before the latter takes the stand to testify in the former prime minister's defence.

Judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali set the date to allow the defence and prosecution to prepare further submissions for the defence's application.

This is in relation to Najib's trial involving the misappropriation of RM42 million of SRC International Sdn Bhd funds.

Earlier, Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah informed the court that the defence was unable to interview MACC's Assistant Commissioner Mohd Nashrudin Amir, who was a witness in Najib's other trial involving 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

He said this was because the IO had at the very last minute cancelled their meeting for an interview on Saturday (Feb 15).

"The witness (initially) agreed to be interviewed on Saturday.

"That morning, as I was getting ready, apparently, this witness strangely said he does not want to be interviewed," he said.

Shafee said it is a precondition for the defence to interview the witness as they need to know what relevant things the witness could say in the trial.

"It is vital for my client's defence. We have the right to interview the witness to get from him the relevant evidence so that no nonsensical evidence come into the court in ensuring a fair trial.

"Any witnesses called without interviewing would be negligence. He can turn out to be a kamikaze witness that destroys our case in a fair or unfair manner," he added.

Meanwhile, lead prosecutor Datuk V.Sithambaram said the prosecution was of the view that the court had no jurisdiction to compel the witness to be interviewed by the lawyers first prior to taking the stand.

"This is not an offered witness, so the witness has the obligation to tell the court and the court has no power to compel the witness.

Trial continues next on Monday.

Najib, 67, is facing seven charges of abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering involving RM42 million of SRC International funds.

13. Rosmah's lawyer tears into Madinah's testimony



It is Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor who is sitting in the dock accused of corruption but it was former Education Ministry secretary general Tan Sri Madinah Mohamad who was left trying to ward off numerous accusations.

KUALA LUMPUR: It is Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor who is sitting in the dock accused of corruption but it was former Education Ministry secretary general Tan Sri Madinah Mohamad who was left trying to ward off numerous accusations from the witness stand today.

The 63-year-old was bombarded with a series of hard hitting questions by Rosmah's lawyer, Datuk Akberdin Abdul Kader, who among other things accused Madinah of being negligent in carrying out her duties, leading to a RM1.25 billion solar hybrid project being awarded to a less than competent company where all government procedures were ignored.

Madinah was also accused of giving inconsistent and contradictory statements in court and having vested interest in the project until the day she retired from the post in September 2016.

Akberdin did not mince his words when he accused Madinah of finding a scapegoat to blame now that she found herself in a corner having to testify as a witness in the case, where Rosmah is accused of soliciting kickbacks from the company to the tune of RM187.5 million and receiving RM6.5 million in 2016 and 2017.

The senior counsel immediately started tearing into Madinah's testimony during cross-examination today by questioning why she failed to follow procedures when dealing with the application by Jepak Holding Sdn Bhd to undertake the solar hybrid project for 369 rural schools in Sarawak.

Madinah explained that she was forced to follow a directive issued by then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak through two minutes in 2015 and 2016.

She said Najib had signed off the minutes by making a notation which read 'sila laksanakan' (please implement) and this left her with no alternatives but to follow through with the directive.

Akberdin: You have been a senior government servant for many years, with your last posting at the Education Ministry as a gatekeeper. Yet this contract was awarded to Jepak Holdings even though there was no value management and no price negotiation ever done.

Madinah: Correct

Akberdin: So there was a clear breach of procedures here.

Madinah: Yes.

Akberdin: You failed in your duties because you did not follow the procedures.

Madinah: I disagree because there were reasons behind it.

Akberdin: You were doubtful that Jepak Holdings will be able to undertake the project.

Madinah: Correct.

Akberdin: There was no pressing need for the project.

Madinah: Correct.

Akberdin: Despite all this, the Education Ministry still went ahead with the project. Why didn't you reject it?

Madinah: I was unable to reject it.

Akberdin: The PM (prime minister) has the authority to give instructions like what was minuted but you also have the authority not to obey if it is against the guidelines.

Madinah: True.

Akberdin: Then why are you complaining now?

Madinah: At that time I received orders from the Education Minister to carry out Najib's instructions. Moreover the ultimate power to decide on the project is in the hands of the Finance Ministry.

Akberdin: The PM's instructions are not cast in stone. You are not bound to follow if it is contrary to procedures. You can still ignore.

Madinah: The minutes by the PM were very clear...he wrote 'sila laksanakan'. It is a directive at large.

Akberdin however continued to badger Madinah that she was not obliged to do what was instructed if it contravened procedures and she finally relented and agreed.

Madinah, who is the sixth prosecution witness, also agreed that she did not write to Najib to inform him that the solar hybrid programme was not a viable project.

Akberdin then accused her of having a vested interest in the project after showing her a document where she had endorsed the issuance of an acceptance letter for the project on the days leading to her retirement as the Education secretary general on Sept 2, 2016.

It was previously reported that Madinah was subsequently appointed by Najib as the Auditor General in February 2017 replacing Tan Sri Ambrin Buang.

Madinah's appointment then had created an uproar as her husband - who is an Umno division chief - had once declared that he would die for Najib.

She was subsequently replaced by Datuk Nik Azman Nik Abdul Majid in March last year.

14. 'Firm wouldn't have given RM6m if Zahid wasn't DPM'



Deputy MD of Datasonic Group Berhad Chew Ben Ben at the KL High Court today.

KUALA LUMPUR: A deputy managing director of Datasonic Group Berhad (DGB) told the High Court here today that he would not have recommended RM6 million in political funds to Barisan Nasional (BN) if Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi was not the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Minister then.

Chew Ben Ben, 63, said he suggested the amount to former DGB chief executive officer Datuk Abu Hanifah Noordin as a long-term contribution to BN through Ahmad Zahid.

Chew, who is the 34th prosecution witness, said he met the then deputy prime minister at the latter's official residence at Seri Satria Putrajaya in April 2017, where Ahmad Zahid told him about his profession before entering into politics.

"Ahmad Zahid also told me that he was impressed with DGB because of its performance, and also said that the general election was approaching and on the political situation in the country then," he said when reading out his witness statement during examination-in-chief by deputy public prosecutor Gan Peng Kun.

Chew was testifying on the 17th day of Ahmad Zahid's corruption trial involving millions of ringgit in Yayasan Akalbudi funds and passport chip supply contracts with several companies.

Chew, who is also a member of the DGB board of directors, said when he met Ahmad Zahid that day, the then deputy prime minister also told him that he was meeting (then prime minister) Datuk Seri Najib Razak to discuss the coming election.

"What came to my mind then was that BN needed money for the election. I then asked Ahmad Zahid whether Datuk Hanifah and I could provide political funds to BN and how much was needed.

"Ahmad Zahid said it was up to me how much I wanted to give to BN," he said, adding that Ahmad Zahid then told me to prepare a cheque for Lewis & Co, the trustee of Yayasan Akalbudi, which is owned by Ahmad Zahid.

"I suggested that Hanifah used his own money because withdrawal from DGB's account required approval from the board of directors," he added.

Chew told the court that DGB had six subsidiaries, namely Datasonic Technologies Sdn Bhd, Datasonic Corporation Sdn Bhd, Datasonic Smart Solutions Sdn Bhd, Datasonic Innovation Sdn Bhd, Datasonic Manufacturing Sdn Bhd and Datasonic Digital Sdn Bhd.

Questioned by counsel Datuk Ahmad Zaidi Zainal, Chew agreed with him that the political fund was for corporate social responsibility and charity.

"I know," he said Ahmad Zaidi put to him that the RM6 million paid to Lewis & Co for Yayasan Akalbudi was for welfare work.

Ahmad Zahid, 67, is facing 47 charges, with 12 of them for criminal breach of trust (CBT), eight for corruption and 27 for money laundering involving tens of millions of ringgit of funds belonging to Yayasan Akalbudi.

15. Witness testifies that RM5 million cash was for 'RM'



A witness in Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor's corruption trial today said his business partner told him that RM5 million cash which they had withdrawn from a bank here was meant for 'RM'

KUALA LUMPUR: A witness in Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor's corruption trial today said his business partner told him that RM5 million cash which they had withdrawn from a bank here was meant for 'RM'.

Razak Othman, however, did not elaborate who RM was although the prosecution is building its case that bribe money of RM5 million and another RM1.5 million was handed to Rosmah in her house in Jalan Langgak Duta here.

The 52-year old, who is the business partner of Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd managing director Saidi Abang Samsudin, said at that time he did not ask too many questions about the money.

"Saidi only talked about it one or two months after I accompanied him to withdraw the money. He just told me that the money was for RM.

"At that time I did not know who Saidi was referring to and I did not bother to ask too many questions. I could sense that he was intentionally keeping it a secret from me," he said.

Razak said this when testifying as the eight witness in the trial where Rosmah stands accused of soliciting RM187.5 million from Jepak Holdings and Saidi to secure a solar hybrid energy project for the company.

She is accused of receiving RM5 million and another RM1.5 million in 2016 and 2017. The project involved supplying solar hybrid energy to 369 rural schools in Sarawak.

The court previously heard that the RM1.25 billion price tag for the project was even more than what the original Penang Bridge cost, which was constructed for under RM800 million in the 1980s.

Witnesses have since testified that the solar hybrid project was signed off by the government under then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak without any value management or feasibility studies being done.

Earlier, Razak described how he ended up becoming Saidi's business partner by joining the latter's company called Syarikat Trace Tag International (Asia) Sdn Bhd in 2016.

He said they eventually grew closer and were regular golfing partners.

However, Razak said he only learnt that Saidi was also active in politics after attending a charity golfing event in Bintulu, Sarawak.

"It was only then Saidi told me that he was also the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu Sarawak Jepak division deputy chief," he said.

Razak eventually related how he and Saidi had gone to Maybank Jalan Tuanku branch sometime in December 2016.

"We went to the bank together and I saw him talking to an officer there. Later I accompanied him to buy two luggage bags before we went back to the bank and he withdrew the money.

"I was later instructed to count the money and it amounted to RM5 million in RM100 notes. I later put RM2.5 million in each bag before we left the bank," he said.

Razak said they eventually got into Saidi's Range Rover and went to the Pavillion building where they met two men in a meeting room.

"I cannot confirm whether one of them was Rosmah's personal assistant Datuk Rizal Mansor as I don't know him," he said while reading from his witness statement.

Razak said after the meeting they exited the building and transferred the two bags of money into an awaiting vehicle, which he said was either a Toyota Alphard or a Vellfire.

"After we handed the money to the other side we drove back and never talked about what had just happened.

"It was only after one or two months that Saidi told me the money was meant for RM," he said.

Last week, Saidi's driver Shamsul Rizal Sharbini, 42, testified seeing what had happened in Pavillion.

Shamsul, who was the fourth prosecution witness, also revealed going to Rosmah's Jalan Langgak Duta house with Saidi to deliver two more bags containing cash.

He said the bags were later left in the living room, where he also saw Rizal who told them that ma'am was upstairs.

"I understood that 'maam` referred to Rosmah," he had then said.

Hearing before High Court judge Mohamad Zaini Mazlan will continue on Monday.

NEW STRAITS TIMES February 20, 2020

16. Zahid's trial: Cheque tagged as 'consultancy fee' changed to 'charity'



A businessman today testified that he had given three cheques amounting to RM2 million in person to Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi in 2017 and 2018.

KUALA LUMPUR: A businessman today testified that he had given three cheques amounting to RM2 million in person to Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi in 2017 and 2018.

Profound Radiance Sdn Bhd director Azlan Shah Jaffril, 49, also told the High Court that one of the cheques worth RM300,000 was initially marked as 'consultancy fee' before it was changed to 'charity'.

The matter was brought up by deputy public prosecutor Gan Peng Kun when he was asking the witness additional questions.

Asked whether there was an order to put the word 'charity' on the cheque butts, the witness answered 'no'.

"It was written (charity) because it (the money) was for the purpose (of the payment)," he said.

He also confirmed that other two cheques were originally marked as 'charity' and 'political funds'.

Azlan was testifying as a prosecution witness in Zahid's trial involving 47 criminal breach of trust (CBT), corruption and money laundering charges involving millions of ringgit belonging to charity foundation Yayasan Akalbudi funds.

He said he handed the three cheques which were made under law firm Lewis & Co to Zahid at different locations at the deputy prime minister's (DPM) office in Putrajaya, the Home Ministry office and the DPM's official residence at Seri Satria between Aug 2, 2017, and Feb 13, 2018.

Azlan said that in 2015, he had sought to have the company start a one-stop-centre (OSC) operations in Bangladesh but there was no feedback on his application.

"That was when I took the initiative to see Zahid who was then the Home Minister," he said.

The 38th witness said he first met Zahid at the Ritz Carlton hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sept 19, 2015, where he had asked the latter to consider allowing his company to start its OSC operations in Bangladesh.

"However, after the second meeting with Zahid on Nov 11, 2015, Profound Radiance received a letter from the Home Ministry notifying it of the cancellation of its application to be allowed to carry out OSC of visa processing work in Bangladesh," he said on the 18th day of the trial.

However, during cross-examination by Zahid's counsel Hisyam Teh Poh Teik, Azlan denied that the payments he made to Zahid was given as a reward for appointing Profound Radiance as the operator of OSC.

Earlier, another witness, former Home Ministry Immigration division secretary Datuk Shahril Ismail told the court that the ministry had selected Profound Radiance as the operator the OSC in Bangladesh from Feb 2, 2014.

The witness said however, Zahid had agreed with the ministry's officials' recommendations to cancel the approval due to the company's failure to start any operations in regards of the OSC in Bangladesh by the end of 2015.

The company was eventually given another chance to start its OSC operations for Visa processing in Nepal and Pakistan instead.

This was following a series of events including Profound Radiance's appeals via letters to the then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Zahid in late 2015.

Trial continues before judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah on March 2.

On Oct 19 and Dec 14, 2018, as well as Feb 20 last year, Zahid had pleaded not guilty to a total of 47 charges, 12 of which are for CBT, eight for bribery and 27 for money laundering involving tens of millions of ringgit belonging to Yayasan Akalbudi.

NEW STRAITS TIMES February 21, 2020

17. Ahmad Maslan wants court to drop his money-laundering charges



Former deputy finance minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan has applied for his money-laundering charges in connection to RM2 million he purportedly received from Datuk Seri Najib Razak to be quashed

KUALA LUMPUR: Former deputy finance minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan has applied for his money-laundering charges in connection to RM2 million he purportedly received from Datuk Seri Najib Razak to be quashed.

His counsel, Hamidi Mohd Noh, said that the application to challenge the charges under the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act (AMLATFAPUAA) 2001 was made on grounds that the charges were 'baseless'.

Hamidi said a notice of motion had been filed on Feb 11 and the notice was submitted to the prosecution on Feb 14.

Sessions Court judge Azman Ahmad has fixed March 26 to hear Ahmad's application.

Deputy public prosecutor Siti Noor Hafizan appeared for the prosecution.

On Jan 21, the Pontian Member of Parliament was charged with involvement in money laundering by not declaring to the Inland Revenue Board the RM2 million he received from Najib via a cheque dated Nov 27, 2013, in his tax filing for the year.

He also faces another charge of giving a false statement to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) when it was recorded under Section 32 of AMLATFAPUAA by the agency's investigating officer Mohd Zairi Zainal.

According to the charge sheet, among Ahmad's statements which were allegedly false, was his denial that he had received any money from Najib.

He allegedly committed the offence at a media conference room at the Parliament building at Jalan Parliament, here between 2.45pm and 3.30pm on July 4, last year.

NEW STRAITS TIMES February 24, 2020

18. Goldman Sachs pleads not guilty in Malaysia over 1MDB bond sales



Goldman Sachs has consistently denied wrongdoing, saying that certain members of the former Malaysian government and 1MDB lied to it about how proceeds from the bond sales would be used

KUALA LUMPUR: Three units of Goldman Sachs pleaded not guilty to charges of misleading investors regarding US\$6.5 billion in bond sales that the US investment bank helped raise for state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), Bernama state news agency reported on Monday.

The US Department of Justice estimates US\$4.5 billion was misappropriated from Malaysia's 1MDB between 2009 and 2014, including some of the funds that Goldman Sachs helped raise.

Malaysian prosecutors filed charges in Dec 2018 against the units, based in London, Hong Kong and Singapore, for misleading investors by making untrue statements and omitting key facts in relation to the 1MDB bond issues.

A representative for Goldman Sachs pleaded not guilty after the charges were read out at the Kuala Lumpur High Court on Monday, Bernama reported.

The court set the trial for November, with hearings scheduled until April 2021, Bernama reported.

Goldman Sachs has consistently denied wrongdoing, saying that certain members of the former Malaysian government and 1MDB lied to it about how proceeds from the bond sales would be used.

Malaysia has said it was seeking up to US\$7.5 billion in reparations from Goldman over its dealings with 1MDB, which was set up in 2009 by then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Najib, who lost a general election in May 2018, is facing 42 criminal charges related to losses at 1MDB and other state entities. He has pleaded not guilty.

19. Jho Low is 'a highly smooth and effective scammer'



Datuk Seri Najib Razak arrives the court ahead of the trial

KUALA LUMPUR: The director of a company who had dealings with fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low said he was shocked and confused after the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) arrested him in July 2015.

Datuk Rosman Abdullah, who is director of Putrajaya Perdana Bhd (PPB), said he was picked up about 6.30pm on July 24, 2015.

"It was on the 8th day of Hari Raya Puasa. I was remanded for four days.

The 53-year old who was testifying in Datuk Seri Najib Razak's trial involving RM42 million of SRC International Bhd funds which were banked into his personal accounts, said:

"It was only during the questioning session I was told that SRC International is a government-owned company and that the bank accounts belonged to Najib."

Rosman said he was also shocked to learn that the graft busters suspected he was complicit in the transfer of funds to and from the accounts of SRC International and Najib.

However, Rosman said he explained to investigators that it was Jho Low who initiated and directed the transactions.



Datuk Rosman Abdullah

gestures as he arrives at the court ahead of the trial. -Bernama

"Jho Low lied to me. I had no knowledge that SRC International was a government-linked company and that the AMBank accounts belonged to Najib..

"I was thereafter released and given letters of clearance by the MACC and also the Attorney general's Chambers," he said.

Rosman said he attempted to contact Jho Low and others associated with the Penang-born businessman but none of them responded.

Asked by Najib's lawyer Farhan Read how he considered Jho Low as a person, Rosman said prior to being arrested he always looked up to the latter as a competent and trustworthy businessman.

"We developed what seemed to me at that time to be a cordial professional relationship. I thought of him as a micro manager.

"Subsequent to my arrest, I now have a clearer picture of what happened in the RM170 million transfer episode. I would describe him as a highly smooth and effective scammer," he said.

Earlier, Rosman, who is a 70 per cent shareholder in PPB, said there were three companies implicated in the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal which were linked to PPB.

These included Putra Perdana Construction Sdn Bhd (PPC), Putra Perdana Development Sdn Bhd (PPD) and Permai Binaraya Sdn Bhd (PBSB).

He said although Jho Low had no official role in the PPB Group prior to his acquisition of the company in April 2015, the latter had all the while come across as though he controlled the companies.

"His conduct and statements gave me no reason to doubt that he was acting in the best interest of the companies," he said.

Rosman said Jho Low subsequently instructed him to open a bank account for PBSB in July 2014 and although he was one of the signatories, some specific instructions were given by Jho Low and his associate Jerome Lee.

These included the transfer of a total of RM170 million, including RM35 million on July 8, 2014, RM105 million (July 14, 2014) and RM30 million (August 8, 2014).

"Jho Low told me that the money was an advance for a contract he was negotiating.

"As he was still the beneficial owner of the PPB Group at that time, I did not think that I had a say in this as long as there was no eventual liability to the PPB Group when my buy-out was concluded," he said.

Rosman said he was later shocked to learn that the money had actually been transferred to Najib's accounts.

Najib, 67, is facing seven counts of power abuse, criminal breach of trust and money laundering in relation to RM42 million of SRC international money.

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

20. Where was Najib on Jan 11, 2010?



Datuk Seri Najib Razak arrives at the Kuala Lumpur Courts Complex ahead of the trial

KUALA LUMPUR: Where was Datuk Seri Najib Razak on Jan 11, 2010?

Two witnesses who testified earlier had said under oath that he was in Saudi Arabia meeting the late King Abdullah Abdul Aziz Al Saud discussing political donations he would be receiving from the Kingdom.

However, lead prosecutor Datuk V Sithambaram today cast doubt on the story when he questioned another defence witness who had been put on the stand.

The deputy public prosecutor asked Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) assistant commissioner Nasharuddin Amir whether he knew Najib was actually no where near Saudi Arabia on that day but was right here in Kuala Lumpur (KL).

"Do you know where the 1Malaysia Development Bhd corporate office is?

"Do you know that Najib was actually right here in KL officiating that office on Jan 11, 2010?" he asked the 48-year old MACC officer who was formerly the investigating officer in the 1MDB case.

However, Nasharuddin said he needed to check in his files to confirm Najib's whereabouts on that particular day.

He was then ordered to get that information and will be taking the stand again on Monday.

It was reported that former minister in the prime minister's department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom had testified that he was present in the same room when Najib met the late King Abdullah on Jan 11, 2010.

He testified that the Saudi Ruler had discussed about political donations which had to be channelled into Najib's personal accounts.

Jamil Khir, who was the fifth defence witness, had said that the informal meeting between the two heads of state had taken place at King Abdullah's palace in Riyadh and he attended in his capacity as the minister in charge of Islamic Affairs.

Another defence witness, former Malaysian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Datuk Professor Syed Omar Al Saggaf, had also testified that he too was at the same meeting on Jan 11, 2020.

The former envoy said the Saudi King had then pledged the financial aid to Najib to ensure Barisan Nasional (BN) retained power in the 2013 general elections.

He said the unofficial meeting took place on Jan 11, just before the former prime minister's official visit from Jan 13 to 16.

Earlier, Nasharuddin testified that he was part of a five man team which had gone to Saudi Arabia on Nov 27, 2015, to record a statement from Saudi Prince Saud Abdul Aziz concerning the 1MDB case.

The others in the team included former MACC chief commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifly Ahmad (who was then a deputy public prosecutor), MACC deputy chief commissioner Datuk Seri Azam Baki and two other MACC officers.

He said the team wanted to record the Saudi prince's statement but ended up meeting his agent and attorney by the name of Mohamad Abdullah Al Koman.

Asked if the Saudis had talked about the USD681 million (RM2.6 billion) donation which had been deposited into Najib's accounts, Nasharuddin said the matter was recorded in the statement but it did come directly from Prince Saud.

To a question from Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, Nasharuddin confirmed that there was another person who seemed to be the odd man out when the MACC team met the Saudis at a palace in Riyadh.

"There was this Chinese man there among all the other Pak Arab (Arabs).

"I was puzzled to see him and found it strange to see this Chinese man among the rest of the Pak Arabs. However, I did not speak to him," he said.

Shafee then asked him if it the Chinese man was Eric Tan Kim Loong - who has been described as one of the most trusted aides of fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low.

Nasharuddin confirmed it and said he only learned about the man's identity later.

There were some light moments in court later when Nasharuddin agreed that the entire MACC team was treated to a dinner in the palace after they finished work and then flown to Mecca in a private jet to perform the Umrah.



Datuk Rosman Abdullah waves at pressmen as he arrives at the Kuala Lumpur Courts Complex.

Meanwhile, another defence witness Datuk Rosman Abdullah testified that Jho Low often referred to Najib as his "boss".

Rosman said Jho Low referred to Najib as his boss when dealing with transfers of money amounting to RM170 million involving his company Putrajaya Perdana Bhd (PPB) and SRC international Bhd.

He said Jho Low told him to notify him once the transfers were done so that he could inform "his boss".

Sithambaram: He asked you to inform him so that he could inform his boss?

Rosman: Yes.

Sithambaram: When he mentioned that he wanted to inform his boss you knew he was referring to Najib.

Rosman: Yes.

Sithambaram: And you also knew that Jho Low had direct connection with Najib?

Rosman: Yes.

Najib, 67, is facing seven counts of power abuse, criminal breach of trust and money laundering in relation to RM42 million of SRC International money.