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WITNESS STATEMENT

'ALL CONDITIONED TO PROTECT THE PM'

Jho Low and nearly everyone in PMO, BN were involved, court told

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BACK in 2015, when the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (IMDB) fiasco blew up, nearly everyone in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Barisan Nasional (BN), as well as fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho (Jho Low) were "conditioned" to protect Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who held the office then.

This was revealed by former IMDB chief executive officer Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi in Najib's IMDB graft trial yesterday.

As the ninth prosecution witness, Shahrol had been on the witness stand for 40 days since Sept 23 last year.

He was under examination-in-chief by the prosecution for six days beginning Sept 23, before being grilled by the defence team from Oct 7 last year.

Shahrol, during re-examina-

tion by lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram, testified that "people" from the Finance Ministry had even used the phrase "must protect the PM".

He said besides Jho Low, among PMO officers, who came up with the idea of protecting Najib, were Najib's then communications advisor Datuk Seri Ahmad Farid Ridzuan and Datuk Amhari Efendi Nazarudin, who was Najib's former special officer.

"(The idea came from) everybody, not only Jho Low, but the officers in the PMO I had interacted with; and BN members from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) whom I inter-

acted with.

"Even from the beginning, I remember civil servants in the Finance Ministry using the phrase 'must protect the PM'."

Asked what they were protecting Najib from, Shahrol said from "reputation" as the New York-based *Wall Street Journal* was coming thick and fast on the IMDB issue.

Shahrol said there was also a meeting that discussed "protecting the PM" at Farid's house.

Sri Ram: Was your evidence in PAC in any way influenced by this (discussion)?

Shahrol: Yes. The fact that any mention of Jho Low was removed and the responsibility for all the

decisions were put on my shoulders.

Sri Ram: So, you would take the blame?

Shahrol: Yes.

Sri Ram: The Americans would say the fall guy?

Shahrol: The Malay saying is *kambing hitam*.

Justice Collin Lawrence Sequerah later released Shahrol as witness but subject to be recalled by the defence.

The trial continues on Monday. Najib, 67, faces four charges of using his position to obtain bribes totalling RM2.28 billion from the IMDB funds and 21 charges of money laundering involving the same amount.

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DISCHARGED AMOUNTING TO ACQUITTAL

Goldman Sachs freed of 1MDB bond sale charges

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court here yesterday acquitted and discharged United Kingdom-based Goldman Sachs International Ltd and its two Asian entities, Goldman Sachs (Asia) LLC and Goldman Sachs (Singapore), on charges relating to the sale of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) bonds amounting to RM27.2 billion (US\$6.5 billion).

Judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan made the decision after deputy public prosecutor Datuk Masri Mohd Daud informed the court that the prosecution did not intend to pursue charges against all the accused and applied to withdraw all charges against Goldman Sachs.

"Goldman Sachs International Ltd, Goldman Sachs (Asia) LLC and Goldman Sachs (Singapore) are therefore discharged amounting to an acquittal from all four charges made against them," said Zaini.

In December 2018, Malaysia filed four charges against the three entities for allegedly leaving out material facts on the sales of bonds between a subsidiary of 1MDB and Aabar Investment PJS Ltd (Aabar).

The offences were allegedly committed at 1MDB, Level 8, Menara IMC, No. 8, Jalan Sultan Ismail, here, between March 19, 2012 and Nov 11, 2013.

The company was charged under Section 179(c) of the Capital Markets and Services Act 2007 and punishable under Section 182 of the same act, which provides for up to 10 years' jail and a fine of not less than RM1 million upon conviction.

The United States Department of Justice estimated that about US\$4.5 billion was misappropriated from 1MDB between 2009 and 2014.

On July 4, the Finance Ministry was reported as saying that Goldman Sachs agreed to a total settlement of US\$3.9 billion to resolve outstanding charges and claims related to the three bond transactions that the company structured and arranged for 1MDB.

The ministry said the settlement includes a cash payment of US\$2.5 billion and a guarantee of a full recovery value of at least US\$1.4 billion in assets that are traceable to the diverted proceeds from the three bond transactions.

Bernama

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ORDER GRANTED

3RD PARTIES CAN CONTEST ASSETS SEIZED FROM NAJIB

First notice was gazetted on Aug 8 last year, but no interested parties came forward

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THE High Court yesterday granted an order for interested parties to claim ownership of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB)-linked assets seized from former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, 16 individuals and companies shortly after the 14th General

Election (GE14).

Judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan made the order after deputy public prosecutor Muhammad Shukri Hussain applied for a new third party notice to be issued.

Earlier, Shukri informed the court that an amended notice of motion regarding the forfeiture of assets had been filed and served on Thursday to those named in the forfeiture application.

The amendments, he said, were made to the particulars of the bank accounts pertaining to the case.

The judge then set Oct 26 for mention for any interested third parties to come forward to contest the seized items.

After the proceedings, Shukri said the first notice was gazetted on Aug 8 last year, before the

amendments were made, but no interested third parties came forward to claim the assets on Aug 30 the same year.

"We have gazetted a new one so we will wait until Oct 26 to see if anyone (third party) comes. If no interested third party appears on the day, we will proceed with hearing the main application."

In the notice of motion, the prosecution named Najib, his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Riza Shahriz Abdul Aziz (Najib's stepson), Nor Ashman Razak Mohd Najib (Najib's son), Nooryana Najwa Mohd Najib (Najib's daughter), Mohd Kyzzad Mesran, Senjauhar Sdn Bhd, Aiman Ruslan, Yayasan Rakyat 1Malaysia, Yayasan Semesta, Yayasan Mustika Kasih, Rembulan Kembara Sdn Bhd, Goh Gaik Ewe (mother of fugitive busi-



Police loading items seized from the home of former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak onto a truck at Pavilion Residences in Kuala Lumpur in 2018. FILE PIC

nessman Low Taek Jho), Ng Chong Hwa (former Goldman Sachs banker), Lim Hwee Bin (Ng's wife), Kee Kok Thiam, Tan Vern Tact and Geh Choh Hun as the first to 18th respondent.

The items, seized on May 17, 2018, include 52 branded handbags, 10 watches and cash in different denominations (RM537,000, £2,700, 2.87 million Sri Lankan rupee, RM187,750 in old notes, £320,500, 13,177 million rupiah,

US\$100, 376 Hryvnies (Ukraine), €20, 50 French francs, 10 rand, S\$40, 531 riyal, 740 Philippine peso and RM21,150 in new notes).

Also seized on the same day were four branded watches, 171 branded handbags and 27 pairs of luxury shoes. Another 40 luxury handbags were seized on June 11, 2018. A total of 27 Nissan Urvan were later seized on Aug 2, 2018, along with several properties and other assets.

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NEWS / Nation

OLD WAY OF WORKING

KPIs FOR BOOSTING ECONOMY

Ministry secretaries-general and dept directors-general must ensure programmes are implemented, says Zuki

PUTRAJAYA

CHIEF Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali has set key performance indicators (KPIs) for all ministry secretaries-general and department directors-general to ensure programmes to mobilise the post-Covid-19 economy are implemented as planned.

He said if they failed, they should give reasonable reasons and explanations to be considered by a committee, comprising him, Public Service Department (PSD) director-general Tan Sri Mohd Khairul Adib Abd Rahman and several appointed members.

He said the matter was decided after discussions with the PSD following many development programmes or projects that could not be implemented.

"So, if we are still moving according to the old way of working, as Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has said, we are worried that the programmes will not be implemented as scheduled.

"For this, we must move quickly and change from the old way of working," he said at the launch of the Malaysiaku Indah Sustainability Programme, organised by the National Association of Wives



Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali (front) taking part in the Pokok Fun Ride at the launch of the Malaysiaku Indah Sustainability Programme at Taman Wetland in Putrajaya yesterday.

BERNAMA PIC

of Civil Servants and Women Civil Servants (Puspanita), here yesterday.

Earlier in his speech, Zuki said even though civil servants may not be affected by the Movement Control Order or the Covid-19 pandemic, they jointly mobilised the economy to help those affected, regardless of rank.

"If we are still struggling and continuing to use our old work procedures, then we worry that the time required to move the economy will take longer be-

cause we have been delayed for long."

When asked about the increase in the unemployment rate, Zuki said several initiatives would be implemented to ensure that those affected by Covid-19, including those who lost jobs because of it, could be helped.

"The government does give attention (to the unemployment rate), but I cannot inform you what our actions are. We are in the planning stage and it will be announced in the near future."

On the Malaysiaku Indah programme, Zuki, who is Puspanita's adviser, said one of the main components of the programme was tree-planting, which was in line with the government's goal of creating a more sustainable green ecosystem.

Zuki participated in the Pokok Fun Ride with Khairul Adib, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador, secretaries-general and Putrajaya Corporation president Datuk Dr Aminuddin Hassim. **Bernama**

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SG GONG CONTAMINATION SPARKS MACC PROBE » PAGE 4

SUNGAI GONG POLLUTION

MACC AND SPAN INITIATE PROBES

Anti-graft agency
says probe will cover
all parties, including
enforcement
agencies

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THE authorities have turned up the heat against those behind the pollution in Sungai Gong, Rawang, which left more than 1.2 million water account holders in the Klang Valley without water last week.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the National Water Services Commission (SPAN) have launched separate probes into the incident.

MACC, in a statement yesterday, said it had initiated an investigation into whether there was any element of corruption in the pollution incident.

The anti-graft agency said its investigation was expected to cover all parties, including enforcement agencies.

MACC urged those with information to come forward to facilitate the investigation.

"MACC has started an investigation into the issues related to the pollution in Sungai Gong, Rawang, Selangor, to check if there was any element of corruption involving all parties, including enforcement agencies.

"We would like to call upon the public with information on the issue to come forward and

cooperate with the commission."

More than five million people in the Klang Valley were left high and dry since Thursday after the Sungai Selangor Phases 1, 2 and 3, and the Rantau Panjang water treatment plants were shut down due to industrial effluent pollution.

The source of the pollution, believed to be engine oil and other solvents, was eventually traced to a factory in Rawang.

The factory, a repeat offender, had been fined RM60,000 for a similar offence.

Four suspects, comprising brothers and managers of the factory, have been arrested.

On Monday, the Selangor Municipal Council (MPS) announced that the factory at the centre of the pollution had been operating since 2014 without a licence or permission from the council.

MPS said data showed that the factory management had not made any application for a licence since 2014.

MPS said it had advised the factory twice to apply for a licence when it was found to be operating for the past six years without proper documentation.

It was estimated that 308 industrial factories were reportedly operating illegally after they failed to get permission from the council.

MPS has more than 6,000 factories operating within its jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, SPAN said it was wrapping up its probe into the pollution incident.

Its chairman, Wan Hassan Mohd Ramli, said the commission was looking at using Section 121 of the Water Services and Industry Act against the culprits.

It carries a maximum fine of RM500,000 or a jail term of up to 10 years.

Those found guilty can alternatively be whipped, or it could be carried out concurrently with other sentences.

"SPAN is completing its investigation papers into the matter, including recording statements from those involved.

"We expect to send the papers to the prosecution for further action within a week," Wan Hassan said in a statement yesterday.

The Environment and Water Ministry, he said, was taking immediate action and assured the public that appropriate penalties would be meted out against the polluters.

He said SPAN was committed to ensuring that any abuse of power with regard to matters involving clean water and resources would be dealt with sternly.



Wan Hassan Mohd Ramli

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IGP: Put environmental pollution offences under Sosma

KUALA LUMPUR: Police have proposed to the Attorney-General's Chambers to categorise environmental pollution offences as organised crimes that should be investigated under the Security Offences (Special Measures) 2012 (Sosma).

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador said the proposal would not only involve the Sungai Gong pollution in Rawang, but all cases involving environmental pollution in the future.

"The Yang di-Pertuan Agong (Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah) has said that he viewed issues threatening the health of the people seriously," he said.

He said this after a handover ceremony for four police department directors and the chairman of the Police Family Association at the Royal Malaysian Police College in Cheras here yesterday.

Hamid said the offence was a serious crime and police were studying the best legislation to deal with those found guilty. "I urge people to be patient as police are investigating the case.

"The investigation will be transparent and police have no interest to either close the case or reduce the severity of the offence."

Commenting on the issue of setting up a team on environmental pollution investigation, Hamid said the Home Ministry would make a decision on it.

"No problem. We are prepared to accept this responsibility and are confident we can help the Environment Ministry with the creation of extra posts in the force."

He said police had handled wildlife issues and helped curb smuggling.

"I believe the duties will increase if the Environment and Water Minister's (Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man) proposal is approved by the Home Ministry, so I am seeking additional police posts."

It was reported on Tuesday that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission had started investigations into elements of corruption in the Sungai Gong pollution case.

About five million Klang Valley residents have experienced water cuts since Sept 3. **Bernama**

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Datuk Rizal Mansor

Rizal: I was scared and fled to Jakarta

KUALA LUMPUR: Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor's former special officer yesterday opened a can of worms on how he felt invisible even after a businessman who had arranged for bribes to be paid to him and his boss threatened to expose everything back in 2018.

Datuk Rizal Mansor said at that time, he knew nothing would happen as Rosmah was then the prime minister's wife.

The 45-year-old key witness in Rosmah's trial said he found out that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) had started investigating Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd managing director Saidi Abang Samsuddin over a RM1.25 billion project some time

in February or March of 2018.

He said the graft-busters were alerted to the scandal when Saidi's business partner, Rayyan Radzwill Abdullah, lodged a report when the latter was not paid his share of the loot.

Rizal said Rayyan once sent him several WhatsApp messages saying that he wanted to inform Rosmah about what had happened.

However, Rizal said, he told Rayyan to sort out whatever problems he had with Saidi.

Rayyan, he said, became angry and threatened to expose everyone, including how Rosmah and her husband, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, and others were involved in the dealings that led to Saidi's

company being awarded the project.

"I remember Rayyan even threatened me that he would ensure I ended up in jail.

"However, at that time, I feared nothing... I never thought any investigation would lead to me and Rosmah because she was the prime minister's wife."

All this, he said, changed just months later after the 14th General Election was held and the new government took over.

Rizal said he panicked upon learning that Saidi and Rayyan were picked up by MACC.

"I decided to pack my bags and flee to Jakarta.

"MACC contacted me to turn myself in, but I asked them for

some time. I decided that I could not run forever and decided to return to Malaysia.

"I was subsequently detained and remanded for six days before being charged with four counts of corruption."

The prosecution has, however, dropped all charges against Rizal after he became a prosecution witness.

Earlier, Rizal gave a detailed account of his role in helping Rosmah secure kickbacks from Jepak Holdings for helping the company get the lucrative contract.

He listed out how Saidi had withdrawn RM5 million and later another RM1.5 million to be given to Rosmah, and how everything transpired. **By Sharanjit Singh**

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WITNESS STATEMENT

'CYBERTROOPERS PAID RM100,000 MONTHLY'

Rosmah's former aide details his role, tasks in First Lady of Malaysia division set up under PMO

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A FORMER special officer to Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor yesterday revealed in detail how the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) set up the First Lady of Malaysia (FLoM) division for her immediately after her husband was appointed prime minister in 2009.

Datuk Rizal Mansor, who worked with Rosmah from 2009 to middle of 2018, also explained why she used to be feared by civil servants and government agencies in the country at that time.

Most shockingly, he admitted being paid RM100,000 in cash monthly by Rosmah to manage a team of cybertroopers tasked with safeguarding her reputation. The cybertroopers, he said, were responsible for monitoring and countering negative and critical news about Rosmah on social media.

The 45-year-old witness, who was reading his evidence in Ros-

from a company to help it secure a RM1.25 billion project in Sarawak, did not hold back as he laid bare everything that happened during his tenure working for the accused.

Rizal started his 46-page witness statement by stating that he was a Business Management graduate from the Multimedia Universiti and had worked as a press secretary to two former ministers before joining TV3 as a senior corporate communications executive.

He ended up as Rosmah's special officer after Datuk Seri Najib Razak was appointed as prime minister in 2009 and the FLoM division was set up the same year.

Rizal said his main tasks included ensuring Rosmah received maximum media publicity for everything she did and to counter negative news published about her.

He revealed that Rosmah instructed him to form a team of cybertroopers in 2012 to deflect and counter negative news about her.

"She paid me RM100,000 in cash every month to finance the operations of the cybertroopers."

"Most of the negative news involving Rosmah centred on her expensive handbags and the lavish wedding of her daughter. There were also stories about how she misused the government jet

get government contracts needed to see her first."

Rosmah, he said, was also accused of being the "boss" who even Najib had to report to as she was the real prime minister of Malaysia then.

"All these reports eventually became a real liability to the prime minister's image and the PMO then instructed the FLoM division to scale down publicity surrounding Rosmah in the media."

Rizal said his relationship with Rosmah later became very close and she started trusting him with other personal and secret tasks.

This included collecting gifts and funds given to her by certain individuals, entrepreneurs and contractors.

"I ended up being rewarded with a datukship in 2014 even though I was just a Grade N48 officer. Such title is usually reserved for officers in Grade 54 and above."

Touching on Rosmah's influence on the civil service and government agencies, he said everyone used to fear and respect the FLoM unit due to her reputation.

"Any request from FLoM was carried out without any bureaucratic hindrance."

"Officers feared being put in cold storage or transferred far away from their hometowns if they did not do what they were told," he said as Rosmah listened intently from the dock.



Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor at the Kuala Lumpur High Court yesterday. PIC BY FATHIL ASRI.

Rizal, who was previously jointly charged with Rosmah, was later asked an additional question by lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram on whether he had cut a deal to give false evidence against Rosmah.

To this, Rizal said he had never been offered any such deal.

The defence team will cross-examine the witness this Monday.

Rosmah is on trial for soliciting RM187.5 million and two counts of receiving bribes totalling RM6.5 million from Jepak Holdings managing director Saidi Abang Samsuddin.

The bribes were allegedly received through Rizal as a reward for helping Jepak Holdings secure the RM1.25 billion solar hybrid project for 369 schools in the interior of Sarawak.

Rosmah was accused of committing the offences between January 2016 and September 2017.

Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday rejected Rosmah Mansor's application to prevent the media from reporting disparaging evidence against her by a former aide.

High Court judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan did not mince his words when he shot down the application by Rosmah's lawyers, Datuk Jagjit Singh and

Datuk Akberdin Abdul Kader.

"I believe in the freedom of the press," he said even as both counsel vehemently pleaded for an order to bar the media from reporting portions of the witness statement, which was being read by Rizal.

Both counsel argued that parts of Rizal's testimony was nothing but hearsay and pure character assassination of their client.

They contended that it should not be published in the media as there would be no turning back the damage done to Rosmah's name even if it was later ruled inadmissible by the court.

However, Gopal Sri Ram countered that the lawyers' arguments could not be accepted as every witness would have disparaging things to say in a corruption trial.

After hearing arguments from both sides, Zaini ordered the witness to continue reading his witness statement.

He said lawyers representing the accused would have a chance to cross-examine the witness and challenge his testimony during the course of the trial.

He also shot down the defence application by stating that the press would not be able to report anything on court cases if the court were to accept their arguments.

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'MOTHER OF ALL CHARGES' ON UNDERSEA TUNNEL PROJECT AGAINST GUAN ENG >> PAGE 5

FRESH CHARGES

GUAN ENG CLAIMS TRIAL TO 2 CHARGES

He is accused of misappropriating land worth RM208m linked to undersea tunnel project

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FORMER Penang chief minister Lim Guan Eng claimed trial at the Butterworth Sessions Court here yesterday on two fresh counts of misappropriation of land worth RM208 million linked to the controversial Penang undersea tunnel project.

The 60-year-old, who is also the former finance minister and is DAP secretary-general, nodded his head in understanding when the charges were read to him by the court interpreter before judge Ahmad Azhari Abdul Hamid.

He, however, pleaded "tidak bersalah" (not guilty) to the charges.

Lim was accused of dishonestly misappropriating a state government land, Lot Number HS (D) 18801, PT Lot 702 Section 1, Bandar Tanjung Pinang worth RM135,086,094 to Ewein Zenith

Sdn Bhd.

Lim also faced a second charge of dishonestly misappropriating a state government land, Lot Number HS (D) 19318, PT Lot 10012 Section 1, Bandar Tanjung Pinang worth RM73,668,986 to Zenith Urban Development Sdn Bhd.

He allegedly committed the offences at the Lands and Mines Department in Penang at Level 21 in Komtar on Feb 17, 2015 and March 22, 2017, respectively.

Both companies were linked to the undersea tunnel project.

He was charged under Section 403 of the Penal Code, which states that whoever dishonestly misappropriates, or converts to his own use, or causes any other person to dispose of, any property, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months and not more than five years and with whipping and shall also be liable to a fine, if found guilty.

Deputy Public Prosecutors Wan Shaharudin Wan Ladin, Francine Cheryl Rajendram and S. Selvaranjini prosecuted.

Lawyers Gobind Singh Deo, Ram Karpal Singh, R.S.N. Rayer and A. Sivanesan represented Lim.

Shaharudin kicked off proceedings yesterday by applying for the case to be transferred to the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court, justifying that the court here had the



Lim Guan Eng arriving at the Butterworth Sessions Court yesterday.
BERNAMA PIC

jurisdiction to do so.

Gobind, however, objected to it and stressed that there should be a solid reason to transfer the case.

"The said case happened here and the land mentioned in the charge is also here (in Penang), hence there is no reason to bring the case to the Kuala Lumpur Court," he said.

Shaharudin then explained that the case was linked to the cases to be heard at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court.

He likened the cases in the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court as the head and the two new ones here as the body, hence it should

not be separated.

"The relevant documents and the legal authority is in Putrajaya. We also need to consider the security and logistics reasons in handling the exhibits.

"The main witnesses are also in Kuala Lumpur. Even the firms of my learned counsels Gobind and Ram are also in Kuala Lumpur.

"Hence it would be a justice for all if this case is transferred there," he submitted.

Gobind then stood up to maintain his stance.

However, Azhari allowed the prosecution's application.

The judge also allowed an extension of the RM1 million bail

paid in the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court from the earlier case for yesterday's case and fixed Oct 12 for mention in Kuala Lumpur.

Outside the court complex, Shaharudin labelled the charges yesterday as the "mother of all charges" with a high chance of winning it.

"We already got the head, the body and now, finally, this is the tail end.

"Our policy is that we can only charge if there is a 99 per cent chance to win it. The remaining one per cent is by act of God," he said, adding that 10 main witnesses would be called to testify for the case.

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'Charges aimed at smearing reputation in run-up to Sabah polls'

BUTTERWORTH: Former Penang chief minister Lim Guan Eng, said the two charges he faces involving misappropriation of lands worth RM208 million amounted to an abuse of power by an un-elected government.

He accused the Perikatan Nasional of seeking to smear and tarnish his reputation in the run-up to the Sabah elections and possible upcoming general election. He also claimed that the government was out to create a negative perception of him.

"And to charge me a day prior to nomination day (in the Sabah elections), that speaks for itself about the timing they chose.

"It is intended, of course, to tarnish my image and smear my reputation in the run-up to the Sabah state elections where nominations will be held tomorrow (today), and maybe also the impending general election.

"Whether this is an attempt to

affect our preparations for the elections in Sabah, or is an act of political vengeance, or to divert attention from the many controversies or scandals of the current un-elected government, is open to public speculation.

"I will prove my innocence in court, particularly when no gratification or corruption money was found in either my personal bank account or in my possession in cash," said the former finance minister yesterday.

The Bagan member of parliament was asked on whether the charges against him yesterday would have any bearing on the Sabah elections.

"That depends on the people. Sabah is far away. What is important is for the people to decide on their future.

"Even though we are fighting for the good of the people, Sabah or nationally, this is the challenge we have to face.

"As such, we hope the people can make a good decision. Don't choose elected representatives who only look after their own interest, or as we always say, *katak* (political frogs). Choose those who look after the people's interest and not those who can offer the highest price. That is the most important thing.

"Maybe because we are fighting wickedness, that is the price we have to pay," he added.

Earlier, Lim claimed trial to two counts of misappropriation of lands worth RM208 million at the Butterworth Sessions Court.

"Again, the two charges against me are baseless and politically motivated.

"It is disappointing that the relevant authorities, including the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), have allowed themselves to be used or misused to conduct this political witch hunt against me based

on flimsy evidence.

"On the other hand, no such action was taken by the MACC against leaders of the present government with irrefutable facts or solid evidence," he claimed.

He said the two new charges yesterday were related to the RM6.3 billion undersea tunnel and three highways project awarded by the Penang government to Consortium Zenith Beijing Urban Construction Group (CZBUCG) in 2013.

He said CZBUCG was awarded the contract by open tender from the state tender committee, headed by the Penang state secretary and comprising senior government officers as members.

"Even though I am not a member of the state tender committee, I am still charged in line with the current thinking of '*semua salah* Lim Guan Eng' (everything is Lim Guan Eng's fault)."

Lim also pointed out that there

were four contradictions in the charges against him, the first of which was that no corruption money was discovered in his possession.

He pointed out that the undersea tunnel project was awarded via open tender while decisions were made by state government officials, the state exco and relevant specialised technical committees and not him alone.

"How can there be corruption or abuse of power when payments made to CZBUCG must be approved by the Penang state government officials after getting consent from an independent professional engineering consulting firm appointed by open tender?"

He also said that CZBUCG last year publicly denied bribing any Penang state government officials and that MACC had cleared the company and its chairman of any bribery or corrupt acts.

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Courts / NEWS

7



KEY WITNESS

EX-AIDE GRILLED ABOUT LIFESTYLE

Rosmah's lawyer
batters Rizal
Mansor during
cross-examination

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THE former special officer to Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor faced off against her lawyer yesterday, and was forced to answer a series of embarrassing questions about his lavish lifestyle despite his monthly salary of RM7,000.

Worst of all, Datuk Rizal Mansor had to admit during cross-examination that he and his family had performed the *umrah* almost every year while he worked for her using "corruption money".

However, he insisted that the money was actually a "political donation" and saw no wrong in using it to go to the holy land and perform the *umrah* with his wife.

Rizal also corrected Rosmah's lawyer, Datuk Jagjit Singh, when the latter asked if he had gone to Makkah on business-class seats.

To this, he answered: "It was first class actually... and it was on chartered flights."

Jagjit: Did you not feel any shame going to the holy land using corruption money?

Rizal: No.

Jagjit: Wow, you can say it with a straight face.

However, the lawyer stopped him from explaining further when the witness wanted to justify what he meant.

Earlier, Rizal, who is a key witness in the trial involving his former boss, also acknowledged that he lived in a RM3.5 million house and owned a fleet of cars, including a Toyota Vellfire, Mercedes Benz, BMW and Audi.

He also admitted to buying two bicycles made by BMC Switzerland, one of the top brands in bicycle manufacturing, which cost about RM16,000 each.

However, he denied the bicycles cost RM40,000 when Jagjit showed him pictures of the make of the bicycle.

"That is a different model," he said, even after he was shown a picture of him and his wife posing for a shot while cycling.

At one stage, Jagjit became so incensed with Rizal that he called the witness "the biggest scumbag in the country".

However, judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan called on the lawyer not to use such words as it was improper. Jagjit subsequently rephrased it by calling Rizal "the most dishonest, contemptible and despicable person".

Rizal disagreed with the suggestion and coolly sat in the witness box as Jagjit continued to pound him with a barrage of hard-hitting questions, sometimes calling him a blatant, pathological liar.

Responding to the lawyer's questions, Rizal admitted that he had previously been slapped with four counts of corruption alongside Rosmah for soliciting and receiving bribes from the managing director of a company, which was bidding for and eventually obtained a RM1.25 billion contract.

He, however, denied cutting any deal with the Attorney-General's Chambers to have the charges against him dropped so that he could testify against Rosmah and pin the entire blame on her.

"I have never cut any such deal," he said, while admitting that he had received money from the company which he termed as a "political donation".

Jagjit: Your evidence about this so-called political donation is an



Datuk Jagjit Singh (centre) arriving at the Kuala Lumpur Courts Complex yesterday. PIC BY SAIFUL LIZAN TAMADI

insult to this court and it is a lie.

Rizal: I disagree.

Jagjit: Going to the holy land to pray is also a political donation?

Rizal: Yes.

Jagjit: Isn't political donation supposed to be for political purposes?

Rizal: Yes.

Jagjit: It is corruption money, isn't it?

Rizal: I disagree.

Rizal had served Rosmah from 2009 until her husband Datuk Seri Najib Razak was ousted from office in 2018 following Barisan Nasional's defeat in the 14th General Election.

Rosmah is on trial for soliciting RM187.5 million and two counts of receiving bribes totalling RM6.5 million from Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd managing director Saidi Abang Samsuddin.

The bribes were allegedly received through Rizal as a reward for helping Jepak Holdings secure the RM1.25 billion solar hybrid project for 369 schools in the interior of Sarawak.

Rosmah was accused of committing the offences between January 2016 and September 2017.

Jagjit will continue with his cross-examination today.

NAJIB RAZAK 1MDB TRIAL

1MDB was set up to help Umno get funds, former CEO tells court

KUALA LUMPUR: The real purpose of the establishment of troubled state fund 1Malaysian Development Bhd (1MDB) by Datuk Seri Najib Razak was to help Umno obtain funds.

This was revealed by 1MDB former chief executive officer Mohd Hazem Abdul Rahman during the trial of the former prime minister, who was also the then party president, over the misappropriation of RM2.28 billion from 1MDB.

Hazem told the High Court yesterday that this was relayed to him by fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho, or Jho Low, in a meeting.

Hazem, who first joined 1MDB in 2012 as its chief operating officer (COO), said his first encounter with Low was through Najib's former principal private secretary, the late Datuk Azlin Alias, who was also a close friend of his (Hazem).

The meeting took place not long after he sent in his resume

for the COO position in 1MDB.

"In the meeting, Low told me the actual purpose 1MDB was set up was to help Umno through businesses which involved 1MDB's strategic investment. But he did not talk about it in detail," he said.

Hazem said in the meeting, Low also explained 1MDB's background, including his involvement in the establishment of the Terengganu Investment Authority until it was taken over by the Finance Ministry and later became 1MDB.

The 10th prosecution witness said Low informed him that the company was under Najib's control and that Najib had the ultimate power in any decisions made in the company.

"I figured that I needed to get clearance from Low first if I work in 1MDB. Azlin had also confirmed this."

"So this was the actual purpose of the meeting."

He said Low was an important

person, who was placed in 1MDB by Najib as a special adviser in charge of investments and fundraising.

He said Low also told him that the funds issued through 1MDB's investments abroad were for Umno's interests and could not be questioned.

"Low also told me that the members of the board knew who he was and understood that the purposes of 1MDB activities were for Najib and that he (Low) played a role as Najib's proxy."

He said after Low's proxies held a fundraiser abroad using a legitimate 1MDB project in Malaysia, the senior management in 1MDB would not know where the monies were channelled to.

"When we asked about the bonds and loans obtained abroad to pay 1MDB's debts to finance the costs of the project within the country, Low would tell us that the money in Umno could not be touched."

"Each time we asked Low about the funds, he insisted that it was Umno's funds," he said.

Hazem said what worried him the most was when he held the position of chief executive officer and managing director in 1MDB in 2013, when Najib intervened in making important decisions in the company.

He said although the board of directors had decided to change any proposals which did not bring profit to the company, it would still proceed when Najib intervened.

"This is because under Article 117 of 1MDB's Memorandum and Articles of Association Clause 117, Najib had absolute power in decision-making."

"This would make it difficult for the management to continue generating profits for the growth of the company and it would probably affect the company's performance."

Hazem said although he had

suspicions that 1MDB funds were being misappropriated, he expected that the funds used for Umno would be returned over a period of time that was agreed upon by the board and shareholders of 1MDB.

However, in September 2013, he began to worry about the amount of funds involved in financing the project.

"I informed Azmy Tahir (1MDB's former chief financial officer) about how worried I was and my intention to step down."

"At that time, I felt that 1MDB had fallen into what I think was the biggest trap in Malaysian corporate history."

Hazem will continue his testimony before judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah today.

Najib, 67, is facing 25 counts of abuse of power and money-laundering involving RM2.28 billion of 1MDB funds, which were deposited into his accounts between 2011 and 2014. By Khairah N. Karim

New Straits Times Paper | 16 September 2020 | Page: 10

MONTHLY SALARY OF JUST RM7,000

LAVISH LIFE WITH JUST RM600,000

Ex-special officer to Rosmah must have used ill-gotten money to sustain lifestyle, says lawyer

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DATIN Seri Rosmah Mansor's former special officer continued to come under fire yesterday as he was cross-examined by her lawyer about his lavish lifestyle, which would have been impossible with a monthly salary of just RM7,000.

Lawyer Datuk Jagjit Singh accused Datuk Rizal Mansor of depending on corruption money to sustain the high-flying lifestyle, which the latter led while working for Rosmah.

Jagjit said it would have been impossible for the 45-year-old civil servant to live in a RM3.5 million house and own cars like Mercedes Benz, BMW, Audi, Toy-

ota Vellfire and Honda Odyssey if not for income derived from corruption.

The senior counsel said he had done some basic calculations based on Rizal's income and allowances while working for Rosmah from 2009 until 2018.

Based on the calculations, Jagjit said Rizal would have earned about RM660,282.72. The amount, he said, was grossly inadequate to buy the things Rizal owned.

"Even if you did not spend a single sen... assuming that you were just living on air, water and love, there is no way you could have had such a lavish lifestyle."

"The only way you could live like that is because you are a corrupted man."

However, Rizal disagreed with the suggestion and was about to explain further when he was cut off by the lawyer.

During cross-examination on Monday, Rizal was also subjected to a barrage of torrid and embarrassing questions about his lavish lifestyle.

Among other things, he admitted performing the umrah almost every year while he worked for Rosmah using ill-gotten money.

However, he insisted that such



Datuk Rizal Mansor

money was actually political donation and he saw no wrong in using it to go to the holy land to fulfil the religious obligation.

Rizal had also acknowledged that he lived in the RM3.5 million house and bought two bicycles made by BMC Switzerland, one of the top brands in bicycle manufacturing, which cost about RM16,000 each.

At one stage of Monday's cross-examination, Jagjit branded Rizal as the "biggest scumbag" before he was asked to retract the word by High Court judge

Mohamed Zaini Mazlan.

Jagjit then rephrased and called Rizal the most dishonest, contemptible and despicable person instead, sometimes referring to the latter as a blatant and pathological liar.

Yesterday, Jagjit continued the mode of attack and challenged Rizal on his statement that monies which he received were political donations.

Asked if collecting political donations was part of his job while working for Rosmah, Rizal said he had solicited for such funds to further his political ambitions.

Rizal on Monday admitted that he had harboured hopes of fighting for the Umno Youth chief's post by taking on its incumbent, Khairy Jamaluddin.

Jagjit: So you knew very well that whatever you were collecting was corrupt money and the political donations were being illegally solicited?

Rizal: My understanding is different.

Jagjit: You did not issue any receipt for whatever was collected?

Rizal: No.

Jagjit: The monies you collected were never received by Rosmah?

Rizal: I totally disagree.

Jagjit: Rosmah never told you to do all this?

Rizal: I totally disagree.

Jagjit: The truth is that all your evidence is false to implicate Rosmah in the deal which you have cut with the prosecution.

Rizal: I have taken the oath to tell the truth.

Rizal had been the co-accused with Rosmah in the case. However, all four charges against him were dropped earlier this year and he has since become a key prosecution witness.

He is now placed under the witness protection programme.

Rosmah is on trial for soliciting RM187.5 million and two counts of receiving bribes totalling RM6.5 million from Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd managing director Saidi Abang Samsuddin.

The bribes were allegedly received through Rizal as a reward for helping Jepak Holdings secure the RM1.25 billion solar hybrid project for 369 schools in the interior of Sarawak.

Rosmah was accused of committing the offences between January 2016 and September 2017.

The trial continues tomorrow.

New Straits Times Paper | 18 September 2020 | Page: 7

CYBERTROOPERS

TOP BLOGGERS ON ROSMAH'S PAYROLL

They were paid between RM1,500 and RM5,000 a month, says former special officer

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BLOGGERS like Papagomo, Parpukari and The Unspinnners were yesterday named as among those paid up to RM5,000 monthly from 2012 to 2018 as part of the cybertroopers team set up to manage Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor's reputation and image at that time.

Her former Special Officer Datuk Rizal Mansor revealed that the trio were just part of a long list of bloggers, Facebookers and individuals paid between RM1,500 and RM5,000 monthly.

He said the payment was made from the RM100,000 cash he received from Rosmah monthly.

"The amount I paid to all of them varied... I gave Facebookers between RM1,500 and RM2,000



Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, where her former Special Officer, Datuk Rizal Mansor (inset), claimed she used cybertroopers to manage her reputation. PIC BY ROHANS SHUKRI

while bloggers were paid RM3,000. I gave the team leaders like Papagomo RM5,000 monthly," he said, adding there were about 12 to 15 bloggers, 30 Facebookers and four team leaders who received the payment.

Rizal, 45, under cross examination by Rosmah's lead counsel Datuk Jagjit Singh, said he was willing to provide the full list of cybertroopers to the court.

To another question on the

source of the funds, Rizal said he was not aware that the RM100,000 given to him monthly by Rosmah was actually from a portion of the Prime Minister's Office budget.

"I cannot confirm the source of the funds. All I can tell you is that I got the cash directly from her (Rosmah) hands every month."

Asked if he had receipts to prove payments were made to the cybertroopers, Rizal said there was no documentation available.

Jagjit then asserted that Rizal did not have any record of the

payments as the latter was actually pocketing most of the money himself.

The lawyer then read out the names of a few pro-Rosmah bloggers who had claimed that they did not get anything from Rizal even though they were part of the cybertroopers team.

Rizal, however, disagreed with the suggestion and said some of the names read out by Jagjit were not on the list of his bloggers.

The others, he said, had all been paid.

Jagjit: Do you have any receipts

of the payments made?

Rizal: No. There was no need for it.

Jagjit: There are many who claim that they were not paid. You took a large portion of it for your own personal use.

Rizal: I disagree.

Jagjit: I put it to you there would have been no need for the team of cybertroopers if you had done your job well.

Rizal: That is subjective.

The 21st prosecution witness earlier this week revealed that he was given RM100,000 monthly from Rosmah to manage a team of cybertroopers.

Rizal had previously been the co-accused in the case.

However, all four charges against him were dropped earlier this year and he has since become a key prosecution witness.

Rosmah is on trial for soliciting RM187.5 million and two counts of receiving bribes totalling RM6.5 million from Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd managing director Saidi Abang Samsudin.

The bribes were allegedly received through Rizal for helping Jepak Holdings secure the RM1.25 billion solar hybrid project for 369 schools in Sarawak.

Rosmah was accused of committing the offences between January 2016 and September 2017.

The trial continues before High Court judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan.

New Straits Times Paper | 18 September 2020 | Page: 1-7

***“My first drawn salary
(as CEO) was RM93,000...
My last drawn salary was RM97,000.
I received bonus twice.”***

Former 1MDB CEO
MOHD HAZEM ABD RAHMAN

» REPORT BY **KHAIRAH N. KARIM** ON PAGE 7



PIC BY ROHANI'S SHUKRI

TWO BONUSES DURING TENURE

Former 1MDB CEO paid RM97,000 a month before stepping down

KUALA LUMPUR: Former 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) chief executive officer (CEO) Mohd Hazem Abd Rahman received a monthly salary of RM97,000 before he stepped down from his post at the strategic development firm in 2015.

Hazem also told the High Court yesterday that he received a bonus twice during his tenure as CEO.

He first joined 1MDB in 2012 as chief operating officer (COO) before replacing Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halimi as CEO the following year.

“My first drawn salary (as CEO) was RM93,000... my last drawn salary was RM97,000. I received bonuses twice. In 2013, I received

a five-month bonus. The second one in 2014 was for 10 months,” he said under examination-in-chief by deputy public prosecutor Mohamad Mustaffa P. Kunyalam.

He was testifying as the 10th prosecution witness in the trial of former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak for the misappropriation of RM2.28 billion funds from 1MDB.

When asked if he had conspired with businessman Low Taek Jho or Jho Low to swindle money from 1MDB, he answered in the negative.

He also denied having received a sum from the funds raised through loans and bonds from the strategic development firm during his tenure as CEO and COO.

During cross-examination by Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, the witness testified that he started his career at Arab-Malaysian Merchant Bank Bhd (AMMB) as an executive after graduating in business management at Case Western Reserve University in the United States.

Hazem said he started working at AMMB in 1996 with a RM1,800 monthly salary. His last drawn salary before leaving the credit company as a senior executive in 1998 was RM2,200.

Shafee then asked him about his earnings when he pursued his career at other companies.

Hazem said after serving AMMB, he worked for Dana

Modal Nasional Bhd as a senior executive until 1999 with a monthly salary of RM2,500.

He then joined Credit Lyonnais Securities Asia as an investment analyst in 2002 with a starting salary of RM7,500 and last drawn salary of between RM11,000 to RM12,000.

This was before he pursued his career at Deutsche Bank in 2006.

“When I joined Deutsche Bank my salary was about RM15,000.

“In Sime Darby (as Group Head Value Management in 2006), my entry salary was RM15,000 and when I left (as managing director), it was RM38,000,” he said.

Hazem also testified that in 2012 when he joined 1MDB,

Shahrol was the one who had interviewed him over lunch at Eastin Hotel in Petaling Jaya. There was only one meeting, he said.

Shafee: Were you headhunted by Shahrol?

Hazem: He did not headhunt me. It was my former boss Datuk Nor Badli Mohd Alias in AMMB and he was a friend of Tan Sri Ismeel Ismail who was a board member in 1MDB. He (Nor Badli) told me that 1MDB was looking for a COO and asked if I was interested and I could send in my resume direct to Ismeel.

The trial continues before judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah on Oct 5.

Najib, 67, is facing 25 counts of abuse of power and money laundering involving RM2.28 billion of 1MDB funds which were deposited into his accounts between 2011 and 2014.



Mohd Hazem Abd Rahman

New Straits Times Paper | 19 September 2020 | Page: 10

VIOLATION OF WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ACT

IN THE DOCK OVER SACKING OF WHISTLEBLOWER

Deputy director claims trial to inciting
firm's chairman to sack whistleblower
for exposing him to MACC

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A DEPUTY director of a Higher Education Ministry-owned company was yesterday charged at the Sessions Court with causing a whistleblower who exposed the former's misconduct to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to be sacked.

Wafiy Abd Aziz, 35, who is the first person to be charged under the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010 (Act 711), pleaded not guilty before judge Azman Ahmad.

According to the charge sheet, Wafiy, a senior official at Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS), had taken detrimental action against the person, who blew the whistle on him to the MACC.

He allegedly did this by inciting Datuk Abdul Rahman Shariff, the chairman of the company, to sign a document of "Termination of Employment" for the whistleblower in retaliation for exposing his improper conduct to the anti-graft agency.

Wafiy allegedly committed the offence at the EMGS office, Suite A-21-1, Level 21, 157 Hampshire Office 1, Jalan Mayang Sari, here,

on Jan 9.

The charge, framed under Section 10 (3)(b) of the Whistleblower Protection Act, carries a fine not exceeding RM100,000, or a jail term of not more than 15 years, or both, if convicted.

MACC deputy public prosecutor Mohd Afif Ali offered no bail to the accused, saying it was a serious offence and non-bailable.

He said if the court were to still allow bail, the prosecution proposed RM30,000.

"The amount of bail decided by the court should reflect the gravity and seriousness of the charge against the accused," he said, adding that the accused might be a flight risk or tamper with the witnesses.

Wafiy's counsel, Siti Sarah Khalili, said her client had given full cooperation throughout the investigation into the case.

She said her client was previously charged under Section 23 of the MACC Act in the same court and had been consistently reporting to the MACC office once a fortnight.

"We plead for the court to maintain the bail amount at RM12,000 and the additional condition to report to the MACC, which was



Education Malaysia Global Services deputy director Wafiy Abd Aziz at the Sessions Court in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

previously set for his (Wafiy's) case under the MACC Act.

"To say that my client would tamper with witnesses is baseless as there are so many people in the office (EMGS) and we do not yet know who are the witnesses who will be called for the trial."

Azman allowed the accused RM15,000 bail with one surety and maintained the additional condition that was previously set.

"The accused is also prohibited from bothering any of the prosecution witnesses throughout the trial and until the disposal of the case," the judge said.

New Straits Times Paper | 22 September 2020 | Page: 8

EX-SPY CHIEF'S CBT TRIAL

Prosecution applies for in-camera proceedings

KUALA LUMPUR: The prosecution in former Malaysian External Intelligence Organisation (MEIO) director-general Datuk Hasanah Abdul Hamid's criminal breach of trust (CBT) case will apply for the proceedings to be heard "in-camera".

Deputy public prosecutor Muhammad Iskandar Ahmad said the prosecution decided to apply for "in-camera proceedings" for several witnesses due to national security issues.

"As of today (yesterday), we already submitted 22 additional documents to the defence team but we would like the court to fix a new date for us to file our application (for in-camera proceedings) as soon as possible.

"We also ask the court to maintain the hearing proceedings, which are expected to commence on Oct 5," he said before High Court Judge Datuk Ahmad Shahrir Mohd Salleh yesterday.

When met after the proceedings, Iskandar said about 15 prosecution witnesses would testify "in-camera" during the proceedings.

In-camera proceedings are tri-

als where the public and press are not allowed to observe the procedure or process.

Meanwhile, Hasanah's counsel, Hamdan Hamzah, concurred that he had received the documents.

"We also asked the court to fix ample time for us to review the prosecution's application for the in-camera proceedings," he said.

The court fixed Oct 5 to hear the application.

On Oct 25 last year, Hasanah, who was the director-general of the Research Division of the Prime Minister's Department, was alleged to have committed CBT by misappropriating US\$12.1 million in funds belonging to the government.

Hasanah was alleged to have done so between April 30 and May 9 at her office in the Prime Minister's Department Complex in Putrajaya.

The charge, under Section 409 of the Penal Code, carries a maximum jail term of 20 years and whipping and fine upon conviction.

She was released on RM500,000 bail.



Datuk Hasanah Abdul Hamid, the former director-general of the Malaysian External Intelligence Organisation, is facing trial in the Kuala Lumpur High Court for misappropriating US\$12.1 million in government funds. FILE PIC

New Straits Times Paper | 25 September 2020 | Page: 18

'CAR WASH' CORRUPTION INVESTIGATION

SAPURA ENERGY DENIES BRIBERY INVOLVEMENT

Firm says it has been cleared of allegations by Brazilian authorities in 2016 and 2017

KUALA LUMPUR

SAPURA Energy Bhd has denied involvement in any form of bribery or corruption in its business dealings in Brazil and elsewhere

in the world.

The statement followed a news report on Brazilian and Dutch police executing dozens of search warrants on Wednesday as part of a corruption probe into offshore oil rig company Seadrill Ltd and Sapura Energy.

The report said Brazil's famed "Car Wash" corruption investigation was eyeing an increasing number of international firms.

The report quoted federal prosecutors in Brazil as saying that they had carried out 25 searches in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

The Dutch police had also carried out searches as part of a par-

allel investigation into the matter.

In a statement yesterday, Sapura Energy said the company had been cleared of all allegations of bribery or corruption during an earlier investigation by Brazilian authorities in 2016 and 2017.

"The company has in the past cooperated and will continue to cooperate with any investigation or regulatory authority in relation to bribery and corruption."

Sapura Energy added that it had a strict policy against bribery and corruption and had internal policies and procedures to mit-

igate the risk.

"As part of its governance and processes, the company has a clause in all its agreements on anti-bribery which will make the agreement void if bribery is involved or is suspected to be involved. We have in the past taken immediate steps to cease contractual obligations whenever a suspicion of bribery or corruption was raised," it said.

Sapura Energy added that these facts demonstrated and were clear evidence of the company's commitment to its zero-tolerance policy towards bribery and corruption.

New Straits Times Paper | 26 September 2020 | Page: 12

Assistant enforcement man pleads not guilty to bribery

IPOH: An assistant enforcement officer pleaded not guilty in the Sessions Court here yesterday to two counts of bribery three years ago. Shaikul Akhtar Abdullah, 37, made the plea after the charges against him were read out before judge S. Indra Nehru. On the first count, the accused, who was attached to the then-Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry here, was charged with accepting RM8,000 from a business premises owner as an inducement to settle a case against the latter who was allegedly selling fake alcohol in 2014. The offence was allegedly committed in Jalan Sultan Abdul Jalil here about 10.30pm on May 30, 2017. Shaikul Akhtar was charged under Section 16 (a)(B) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act. **Bernama**

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11

MISMANAGEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

NAJIB'S SUIT AGAINST BANK, EX-OFFICER STRUCK OUT

Lawyer Shafee plans to file appeal against High Court decision

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THE High Court has struck out Datuk Seri Najib Razak's suit against AmBank Islamic, AMMB Holdings Bhd and its former officer Joanna Yu over mismanagement of his accounts, which were scrutinised in his SRC International Sdn Bhd trial.

Judge Datuk Khadijah Idris

made the decision after allowing Yu and the two AmBank entities' application.

In her judgment, Khadijah said the action brought by Najib against the three was an abuse of the court's process and made for collateral purposes on his criminal matter, the SRC International proceedings.

"On this ground, the court finds that this action is unrelated to the SRC International case," she said.

Najib's contention that he had only discovered about the fact of the manipulation of his accounts by Yu, during the trial, was unsustainable, the judge added.

She awarded costs of RM30,000 to both AmBank entities and RM25,000 to Yu.

Lawyer Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, who represented Najib, said he planned to file an appeal against the decision.



AmBank lawyer Yoong Sin Min (second from right) and Joanna Yu's lawyer Datuk Gurdial Singh Nijar (second from left) leaving the Kuala Lumpur Courts Complex after yesterday's decision. PIC BY EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN

Lawyer Yoong Sin Min appeared for AmBank while Datuk Gurdial Singh Nijar represented Yu.

Najib filed the suit on Dec 9, last year naming AmBank Islamic Bhd, AMMB Holdings Bhd and Yu, who was a prosecution witness in the SRC International trial, as defendants.

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

He claimed that the defendants did not engage with him to report on Low's action regarding the said bank accounts and that the bank had facilitated unauthorised

third party to make money transfers between accounts 880, 898 and 906.

The Pekan member of parliament also claimed that he had been kept in the dark on the details of his own bank accounts' statements and other related documents by the bank on Low's instruction.

Najib alleged that 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 and that the accounts had been 'red flagged' by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM).

He said the defendants failed to report and get direct instructions from him despite the accounts

being red flagged.

Najib also claimed that he only discovered the act committed by the defendants during the SRC International trial after the prosecution had revealed the conversations between Yu and third parties.

Najib also sought special, general, aggravated and exemplary damages from the defendants.

Najib was, on July 28, sentenced to 12 years' jail by the High Court and fined RM210 million after he was found guilty of all seven charges of criminal breach of trust, abuse of power and money-laundering on RM42 million of SRC International funds.

However, he obtained a stay of the sentence pending appeal.

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Stumbling blocks to shared prosperity vision

KUALA LUMPUR: Unhealthy competition brought about by monopolies in the markets, profiteering, corruption and leakages continue to hinder Malaysia's efforts to realise the Shared Prosperity Vision (SPV) 2030.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said these were stumbling blocks to the country's efforts to achieve a fair economic growth and distribution, as well as improving the Bumiputera economy.

He said the income gap among ethnic groups and disparity between different regions in Malaysia were prevalent despite efforts by the government to enhance the people's standard of living.

"The wage rate for employees in the country is calculated based on the percentage of the compensation of employees per gross domestic product (GDP), which is still low at 35.7 per cent, compared with 46 to 52 per cent earned by employees in developed countries.

"Apart from that, expenditures for research and development is still low at 1.4 per cent to the country's GDP.

"This has hindered the wider reception of the most advanced technology and automation by industries, while limiting innovation and increase in productivity," he said at the Kuala Lumpur Shared Prosperity townhall session organised by Institut Masa Depan Malaysia yesterday.

Some 400 people attended the event.

Present were Senior Education Minister Dr Radzi Jidin, Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Mohd Zuki Ali and Institut Masa Depan Malaysia chief executive officer Mohd Nizam Mahshar.

Muhyiddin said products and services in the country had yet to reach the optimum level as de-



Disparity between different regions in Malaysia is prevalent despite the government's efforts to enhance the people's standard of living. FILE PIC

pendency on commodity-based exports was relatively high.

He said a huge portion of the industry was in the low value-added category, with minimum usage of technology.

Muhyiddin said the country had yet to reach its real potential, including in fields like information technology and communications, as well as machineries and equipment, which needed a boost in investment to generate a more robust growth.

Muhyiddin, who is Institut Masa Depan Malaysia founder and chairman, said the 15 guiding principles identified for SPV 2030, along with seven thrusts and eight enablers to achieve its three main objectives, would allow for a united, prosperous and dignified nation for all Malaysians.

"Under SPV 2030, nobody will be left behind. Prosperity is colour-blind. It must not discriminate against anyone.

"All of you, regardless of whether you are a Malay, Chinese, Indian, Sikh, Iban, Kadazandusun, Murut, Bidayuh, Bajau, Melanau or Orang Asal, all of you have the right to be prosperous and successful in this country."

Muhyiddin said a Shared Prosperity Action Council would be formed to oversee the implementation of SPV 2030.

He said he would chair the council, while the Shared Prosperity Delivery Unit, established to coordinate efforts between agencies and stakeholders, would serve as its secretariat.

He said amendments and enhancements were being made before the policy kick-starts next year, and adjustments needed to be made due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"SPV 2030 will be given focus through the implementation of the 12th Malaysia Plan and 13th Malaysia Plan."

Muhyiddin said the townhall session was organised to provide further explanation on the government's plan in implementing SPV 2030.

It was themed "Advancing the Shared Prosperity Vision Agenda".

SPV 2030 is Malaysia's 10-year commitment to achieve sustainable growth with fair and equitable distribution across income groups, ethnicities, regions and supply chains.

Visit www.institutmasa.com/makmurbersama for more information.