

'NAJIB HAD OVER RM1B IN ACCOUNT'

At other times, account was overdrawn by more than RM1 million, says bank manager

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THE High Court here yesterday heard how Datuk Seri Najib Razak at one time had more than RM1 billion in his account, and at other times the account was overdrawn by more than RM1 million.

It was also revealed that Najib had written to his bank about returning a portion of money that was allegedly donated to him by a Saudi prince.

The names of Prince Faisal Bin Turki, a Saudi prince who was formerly reported to have been linked to the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal, and that of Blackstone Asia Real Estate Partners, another 1MDB-linked company, were mentioned in court.

These cropped up during the cross-examination of AmBank Group branch manager R. Uma Devi, 40.

Najib's counsel, Harvinderjit Singh, had cross-examined her the entire day and established that Najib had opened a current account in 2011 knowing that a "foreign amount" was coming in.

Uma also confirmed that Najib had corresponded with the bank in 2013 when he was closing the



AmBank Group branch manager R. Uma Devi at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY MUHD ZAABA ZAKERIA

account and that he was remitting a portion of the unused donation/personal gift in a single transfer.

The amount mentioned was about US\$620 million (RM2.56 billion).

However, a portion of the money (that was donated) also went into his new accounts. The amount mentioned in court was about RM152 million.

Harvinderjit had earlier asked Uma to confirm if the money had come from Prince Turki and from the Ministry of Finance in Riyadh, and she answered in the affirmative.

Asked if some form of reporting to Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) would have been done, she replied "yes".

It was reported that Prince Turki, the co-founder of PetroSaudi, a company that was linked to the 1MDB scandal, was among 11 princes arrested in anti-corruption raids in Saudi Arabia in 2017.

It was reported that he was detained on accusations of corruption in the Riyadh Metro project and taking advantage of his influence as the governor of Riyadh province to award contracts to his own companies.

Uma, who is the Jalan Raja Chulan AmBank branch manager, had earlier explained several transactions involving Najib's accounts, that of 1MDB subsidiary company SRC International Sdn Bhd, Gandingan Mentari Sdn Bhd, Ihsan Perdana Sdn Bhd and

Perdana Constructions Sdn Bhd.

She said at one time, the balance in Najib's bank accounts peaked at RM1.9 billion in 2013.

In the morning session, Uma confirmed that the bank account of Gandingan Mentari was tagged as "high risk" and monitored under the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA).

She said the account was flagged as high risk based on the bank's own assessment on its system as it handled a lot of cash.

Uma, who was the 21st witness in the ex-prime minister's trial involving RM42 million in SRC International funds, also confirmed that Gandingan Mentari had only one account at the branch.

Harvinderjit: What do you

mean by a company that is listed as high risk?

Uma: A company that handles a lot of cash. This is among the criteria of a company tagged as "high risk".

Harvinderjit: How do you know that a company is considered high risk without looking at any prior transaction?

Uma: Even without transaction history, it could be checked through the system based on some factors and categories.

Harvinderjit: What difference would it make if it is tagged as high risk?

Uma: There would be more monitoring by the Compliance Department, which will constantly go through the accounts.

Earlier, when asked whether SRC International was a subsidiary of 1MDB, Uma said: "I am not sure. Can't confirm that."

However, later she agreed with Harvinderjit's suggestion that it could be that SRC International was 1MDB's subsidiary after May 10, 2011.

She agreed that relationship managers Joanna Yu, Krystle Yap and Daniel Lee, who were managing SRC International and Najib's accounts, were also managing the 1MDB accounts.

To a question on whether the trio were managing the accounts of Yayasan Gemilang 1Malaysia, Uma replied she was not sure and needed to check.

She acknowledged that action had been taken by Bank Negara Malaysia in the form of a fine following the transactions.

When asked by Harvinderjit on what the fine was for, she said: "I can't recall."

The trial continues today before High Court judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali.