

# 'NAJIB'S PAYMENTS TO 2 FIRMS MADE THROUGH MIDDLEMAN'

This was to prevent the cheques from circulating on FB, Najib's ex-aide tells court

KHAIRAH N. KARIM AND RAHMAT  
KHAIRULRIJAL  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**C**HEQUES issued by Datuk Seri Najib Razak, 66, to two organisations were made through a middleman to prevent the payment from circulating on Facebook, the High Court heard.

Former political secretary to Najib, Datuk Wong Nai Chee, 50, said the cheques were made out to tycoon Tan Sri Lim Soon Peng before the payments were relayed to the two entities, namely Akademi Kewartawanan dan Informasi Taima (Taima Journal-

ism and Information Academy) and AD Network.

Wong said this was done to prevent others from trying to benefit from the cheques.

Wong was testifying in the former prime minister's second trial involving the misappropriation of RM2.3 billion of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) funds.

He said a cheque dated Aug 7, 2013, for RM246,000 signed by Najib, was made to Lim, who would then make back-to-back payments to the two organisations.

The fifth prosecution witness told the court that Akademi Kewartawanan dan Informasi was a Chinese weekly publication, while AD Network was the administrator of the Ah Jib Gor Facebook page.

When asked by lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram during examination-in-chief whether

Lim had any connection with the two entities, Wong replied "no".

"The cheque was made to Lim because we trusted him. He would not run away with the money, which was for the expenses of the Chinese weekly publication as well as to maintain the Ah Jib Gor Facebook page.

"If a personal cheque is issued by the PM (Najib), we do not want it to circulate on Facebook," he said.

Wong said "we" meant Najib and him.

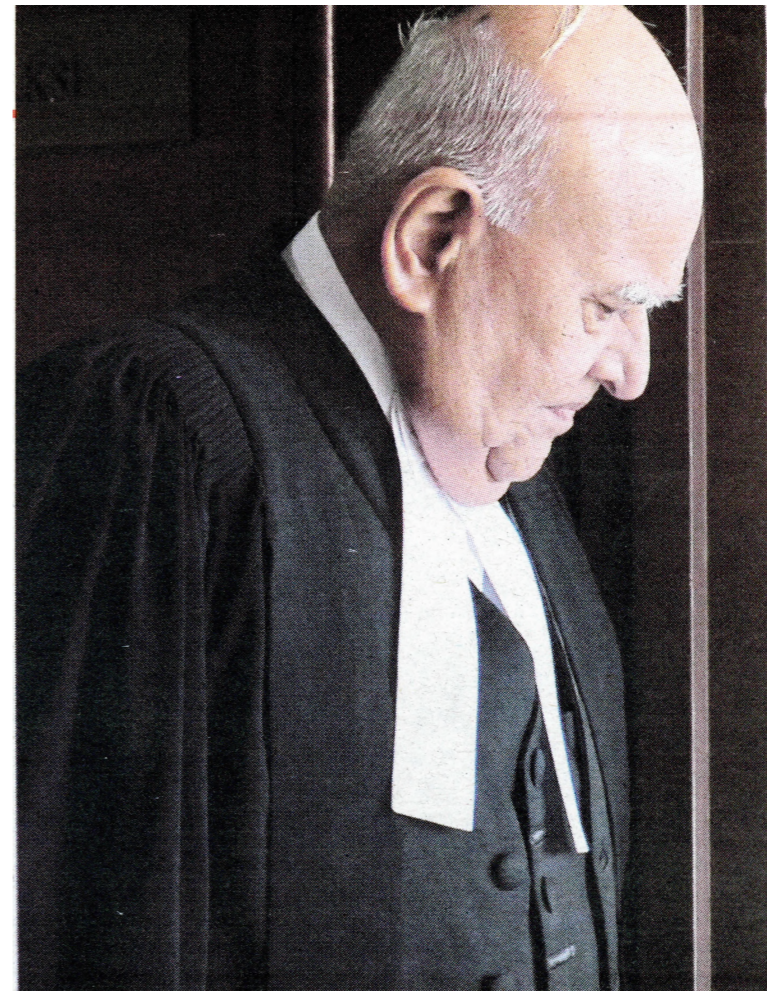
The witness testified that a RM30,000 cheque dated Jan 21, 2012, was made out to him, which was meant for the payment for a political analyst.

"I later paid the money to the political analyst."

However, when asked about another cheque dated May 26, 2012, amounting to RM2,600 issued by Najib, Wong said he



Datuk Wong Nai Chee



Lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram at the Kuala Lumpur High Court yesterday. PIC BY EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN

could not recall.

Cross examined by Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah whether he had been charged as the recipient of the cheques, Wong said no.

Trial continues before judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah.

On Sept 20 last year, Najib was charged with 25 counts of corruption involving RM2.28 billion of 1MDB money.

His first four charges were framed under sections 23(1) and 24(1) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009, while the other 21 charges

were under Section 4(l)(a) of the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act 2001 (AMLATFA).

For the charges under the MACC Act, Najib was accused of using his position as prime minister, finance minister and chairman of the 1MDB advisory board at the time to receive bribes on four occasions.

The money-laundering charges involved nine counts of receiving illegal proceeds, five counts of using illegal proceeds and seven counts of transferring the proceeds to other entities.