

# 'Najib issued cheques through middleman'

> Indirect payments made to prevent pictures of cheques from circulating on Facebook, court told

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Payments made by Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak to two organisations, namely a weekly Chinese publication and the administrator of a Facebook page went through a middleman instead of the parties directly.

Former political secretary to Najib, Datuk Wong Nai Chee, 50, said this was to prevent pictures of the cheques from circulating on social media.

The witness, who is a lawyer, said this was also to prevent other people from trying to claim credit for the payments to enhance their own credibility.

The fifth prosecution witness said a RM246,000 cheque signed by Najib was issued to tycoon Tan Sri Lim Soon Peng, who would

then make payments to Akademi Kewartawanan dan Informasi and AD Network.

He said this during examination-in-chief by lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram on the second day of Najib's trial in relation to four charges of having used his positions to obtain gratification totalling RM2.3 billion in Malaysia Development Berhad funds and 21 counts of money laundering involving the same funds.

He said Akademi Kewartawanan dan Informasi was involved in the publication of a Chinese weekly, while AD Network was the administrator of the "Ah Jib Gor" Facebook page.

However, Wong said Lim had no connections with the two entities.

**Sri Ram:** Can you explain to his Lordship why the cheques were not paid out to these two entities directly?

**Wong:** It was paid to Lim for a back-to-back payment to these two parties, because we trusted Lim, he would not run away with the money, and these two cheques were paid for the expenses incurred for the Chinese weekly publication as well as to maintain the Ah Jib Gor Facebook (page).

**Sri Ram:** Why was it back-to-back? What do you mean?

**Wong:** If we were to issue a personal cheque of the prime minister, we do not want that to be circulating on Facebook. So we would rather pay to somebody whom we trusted. We trust Lim.

**Sri Ram:** You said, "we" did not want the cheques circulated on Facebook. Who do you mean by "we"?

**Wong:** Myself and former PM (Najib).

The trial before Judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah continues. - Bernama