

'Watch was to make up for holiday'

Ex-PM had to return to Malaysia because of Kelantan flood, court told

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor had chosen the RM466,000 luxury watch herself and it was to make up for a family holiday in Honolulu, Hawaii, that was cut short, the High Court was told.

The watch, bought at a Chanel boutique in Honolulu on Dec 22, 2014, for US\$130,625, was one of the spendings that was questioned in the SRC International Sdn Bhd trial.

Former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak (*pic*) said the holiday was cut short as he had to return to Malaysia because Kelantan was hit by a terrible flood.

"I explained the situation to my family and they were upset that I had to leave them immediately and go back to Malaysia. They were dis-

appointed with my decision," he said here yesterday.

His son, Nor Ashman, who was working in Istanbul, Turkey, had flown to Honolulu only to find out he was no longer there.

Because of this, Najib said he decided to buy something that was chosen by his wife.

To another question by his lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafie Abdullah, Najib said the watch was the only purchase that was personal in nature, and bought using the credit card.

"I didn't use this card for anything else," he added.

The court previously heard a testimony from AmBank senior vice-president Yeoh Eng Leong about Najib's spending on two credit cards, which included the watch.

The court also heard that Najib sacked his former deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and a former



minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal after the two made statements on 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) outside of Cabinet meetings in 2015.

Najib said this during cross-examination conducted by Attorney General Tan Sri Tommy Thomas.

Thomas: Serving as prime minister gives one the influence and

power to appoint individuals to positions; it gives the power of appointment?

Najib: Yes, that is the power of the prime minister but it has its limit.

Thomas: Along with the power to appoint, there is power to fire?

Najib: Correct, but a prime minister needs to use the power prudently.

Thomas: You were not shy to use that power as you fired your then deputy prime minister and Shafie.

Najib: I didn't just use my power that way.

Thomas: This is a fact. It is well known that you sacked them.

Najib: I sacked them because they made statements in public when it should have been done in Cabinet (meetings).

The court also heard that Najib appointed himself finance minister as he felt that he was able to improve the country's economy.

"I felt I had the ability to improve our economy, if you look back at my time and the macro figures, there were vast improvements," he said, before listing some of his achievements as finance minister.

"In 2017, our economy grew by 5.9%. The ringgit was stable during my time.

"I'm not bragging but I have delivered as a finance minister."

Najib disagreed with Thomas' suggestion that he appointed himself as finance minister to secure government guarantees for 1MDB and its subsidiaries.

Najib is facing seven charges – three for criminal breach of trust, one for abuse of power and three for money laundering involving SRC International Sdn Bhd funds totalling RM42mil.

The hearing continues before Justice Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali continues today.