

# 'I sensed there was enough money'

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## Najib says he signed cheques amounting to millions without knowing account balance

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Former Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak told the High Court here that he had a 'sense' that there was enough money in his bank accounts, so he kept issuing cheques even without knowing their exact balance.

Najib, 66, said he would only ask his former principal private secretary, the late Datuk Azlin Alias, to check with SRC International Sdn Bhd CEO Nik Faisal Ariff Kamil regarding the balance in his accounts.

"Nik Faisal and Azlin did not tell me the exact balance left in the accounts and I had never contacted Nik Faisal directly even though he was the mandate holder for my accounts," he said during cross-examination by ad-hoc prosecutor, Datuk V. Sithambaram.

In response to this, Sithambaram said nobody issued cheques with-

out knowing the exact balance in the account, especially when Najib who held the Finance Minister's position at that time did this.

To a question by Sithambaram, the Pekan MP reiterated that he believed that the monies in his bank accounts ending with 880, 898 and 906 came from a donation by an Arab royal family.

"I have no knowledge and I never questioned the funds being paid into my accounts until it became an issue," he said.

Najib also agreed with Sithambaram's suggestion that he wrote cheques amounting to millions of ringgit for among others, political use.

Sithambaram also questioned Najib over his allegedly different responses to whether he signed the Minister of Finance Inc (MKD) minutes on allowing an amendment to

the 1Malaysia Development Bhd's (1MDB) memorandum and articles of association (M&A).

Sithambaram said the amendment was to insert Article 117, which provided great power to then premier Najib in relation to the 1MDB board's decision-making.

Sithambaram: In your written witness statement, you said that you could not be sure whether you signed the amendment to 1MDB's M&A due to the strangeness of the corporate documents but during cross-examination by Attorney-General Tan Sri Tommy Thomas, you confirmed it was your signature.

Najib: Yes but that is subject to seeing the original document.

Sithambaram then remarked that while Najib was a careful man in that he even issued a press statement regarding chocolates that

went missing during a police raid at his residence, he had not paid much attention to his personal and government's funds.

Najib, however, said it was a complaint (on chocolates) from his daughter.

Sithambaram: So you have issued a press release... it was not your chocolates then?

Najib: Not mine.

Sithambaram: I find it difficult that the (former) prime minister and finance minister is quite clueless on his financial accounts.

Najib: You can ask my private secretary, who is managing my personal accounts.

Towards the end of the afternoon's proceeding, Sithambaram informed judge Justice Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali that he was feeling dizzy and nauseous, and proposed for an early adjournment

for the day.

Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah did not object to the application.

The court erupted into laughter when Justice Mohd Nazlan asked whether Sithambaram was not feeling well due to constant interruption from Najib's co-counsel Harvinderjit Singh.

Allowing the prosecution's application, the judge set for the trial to resume on Jan 6 and reminded Najib that he is still under oath and not to discuss the case with anyone.

On Nov 11, Najib was ordered to enter his defence on seven charges of misappropriating RM42mil of SRC International Sdn Bhd funds, comprising three counts of criminal breach of trust (CBT), three counts of money laundering and one count of abuse of position. — Bernama