

Najib's 1MDB trial postponed to Aug 19

KUALA LUMPUR: The criminal trial of Datuk Seri Najib Razak involving RM2.28 billion in 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) funds has been rescheduled to Aug 19.

This is the second time the trial dates for the 1MDB trial were moved to make way for the ex-prime minister's SRC International Sdn Bhd trial, which has entered its 12th day.

High Court judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah, who is presiding over the 1MDB case, fixed from Aug 19 to Aug 29, the whole months of September and October and the first two weeks in November as the new trial dates.

The judge fixed the dates after allowing a notice of motion by the prosecution team in the SRC International case for the 1MDB trial to be postponed pending completion of the SRC International trial.

"I am acceding to this notice of motion on the condition that we start on Aug 19, except for the dates on Fridays, subject to the defence counsel's request.

"Trial to end on Nov 14," he said.

Sequerah warned all parties not to attempt any more adjournment to delay the trial.

"I need a commitment from all parties...This is the second time I have been asked to vacate the

dates. "I do not want another application for a postponement.

"1MDB is also a public interest case.

"I had to vacate other cases before me that are not less important, like murder cases, for this," he said.

Earlier, Sequerah denied lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah's request for the trial to begin in mid-September due to another trial matter involving Samirah Muzaffar, who was charged with murdering her late husband, former Cradle Fund Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Nazrin Hassan.

Attorney-General

Tommy Thomas, who leads the prosecution team in the SRC In-

ternational trial, said the court must give priority to the case with the most public interest.

"Samirah's case is just another murder case.

"I am sorry, I refuse.

"This (1MDB) is a priority," he said, opposing Shafee's request for dates to be fixed in the middle of September.

Thomas, in his submission, said the prosecution did not want the SRC International case to be part-heard and left hanging.

He told the court that the prosecution could possibly close its (SRC International) case on June 21, the last date initially fixed for the 1MDB trial.

On Wednesday, the prosecution filed a notice of motion to ask Se-

querah to vacate dates before him pending the completion of the

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COLLIN LAWRENCE SEQUERAH
High Court judge

SRC International trial.

In an affidavit in support of the notice, deputy public prosecutor Muhammad Izzat Fauzan said it was best for the trial to be completed without adjournment as it would be prejudicial to the accused to have multiple trials to proceed on a part-heard basis.

On Sept 20 last year, Najib, 66, was charged with 25 corruption charges involving RM2.28 billion allegedly from 1MDB.

His first four charges were framed under Section 23 (1) and 24 (1) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009 while the other 21 charges were under Section 4(1) (a) of the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act 2001.

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

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