

# Najib was merely checking his appearance with handphone, court told

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KUALA LUMPUR: It was something sharp poking his eyebrow that had caused Datuk Seri Najib Razak to use the camera function on his mobile phone to see his face.

The act - which was reported by a news portal as 'taking selfies' - came to the High Court's attention when ad hoc prosecutor Datuk V. Sithambaram asked the court to issue a directive or guideline over the matter.

Lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah said his client was merely checking his appearance and was not taking selfies in the courtroom.

He singled out the news portal's report and its reporter who sat at the public gallery.

The report claimed that Najib was taking selfies during the proceeding.

"This is the sort of reporting that is not welcomed," he said on the 16th day of Najib's corruption trial involving RM42mil in SRG International Sdn Bhd funds yesterday.

Muhammad Shafee lambasted the portal further, saying it had started the "zero value" news report, which was later picked up by other news outlets.

"If they want to be treated as the fourth estate, they should not act like estate people," he said.

Sithambaram replied that the issue before the court was whether a selfie was indeed taken.

Justice Mohd Nazlan then directly asked Najib whether he had taken a selfie, and he denied it.

"I used it as a mirror to check my personal appearance," Najib said.

The judge accepted the explanation, but reminded all parties of court rules.

"As a general reminder, I must emphasise that it is a court rule. No photography is allowed.

"If selfies were taken just now, which the accused has said he did not do, it would be contempt of court," he said.

Justice Mohd Nazlan said the sanctity of

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court proceedings must always be respected.

Recordings, whether audio or visual - which include photography - are not allowed, according to the rules of open court.

The court police could seize the recording device if one is caught breaking the rules.

Last month, the same High Court issued a warning against sharing recordings of the proceedings on social media.

A two-minute-plus recording, entitled "Hari Kelima Perbicaraan Dato' Seri Najib (the fifth day of Najib's trial)" was uploaded on social media by Najib's former special officer Isham Jalil on April 19.

Meanwhile, witness Azlida Mazni Arshad, who is the vice-president of the Legal and Secretarial Department at Retirement Fund Incorporated (KWAP), testified that Najib had asked the body to rush the approval for the RM2bil loan to SRC International in 2011.

She said she was informed of the matter in a special meeting chaired by KWAP chairman Tan Sri Wan Aziz Wan Abdullah.

"As the meeting secretary, I took the minutes of the meeting and the CEO informed everyone at the meeting that the Prime Minister wanted the loan approval to be expedited and that the RM2bil loan was enough," she said.

KWAP approved the loan of RM2bil to SRC International in 2011 before approving another loan of the same amount in 2012.

The hearing continues next Tuesday.