

Najib in a discussion with Muhammad Shafee during court proceedings yesterday.
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Najib's 1MDB trial to commence on Aug 19

KUALA LUMPUR: The trial of former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak, who is facing 25 corruption and money laundering charges involving RM2.28 billion of 1Malaysia Development Berhad's funds (1MDB), will commence on Aug 19.

High Court Judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah yesterday set Aug 19 to 29; throughout the month of September and October except for Fridays; and the first two weeks in November, for the trial.

The new dates were fixed after Attorney-General Tommy Thomas, who is the lead prosecutor in Najib's SRC International Sdn Bhd's trial, requested the court to postpone Najib's 1MDB trial until the SRC case is settled and received no objection from the defence team.

"We do not want the SRC case to be part-

heard and left hanging. If everything goes well, the prosecution can close the case on June 21, which is also the last date fixed for the 1MDB case," he said adding that the SRC case is a matter of public interest.

Sequerah said 1MDB was also a public interest case and that the court had vacated cases that carry the capital punishment in order to hear the 1MDB trial.

"I need a commitment from both the prosecutors and defence lawyers on the trial dates," said the judge.

Meanwhile, Najib's lawyer Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, said the defence team had no objection to the new trial dates. However, he asked the court not to set hearings on Fridays so that the lawyers could work on other matters.

Before fixing the new dates, the judge had

warned both prosecution and defence not to postpone the case again as this was already the second time the 1MDB case trial was adjourned.

"This is the second time you are asking me for new dates. You must remember, 1MDB is also a public interest case. I also have other cases such as murder and drugs.

"So, I fix the whole month of September and October and also the first two weeks in November. I don't want another application coming in to postpone the 1MDB trial," said Sequerah. The court also set June 21 for case management.

On Tuesday, the prosecution in Najib's SRC case filed a motion to vacate Najib's 1MDB trial dates from May 14 to enable the prosecution to settle the case first before the 1MDB's trial commenced. - Bernama