

Najib to know fate tomorrow

First corruption trial to conclude after defence case

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KUALA LUMPUR: The first of the 1Malaysia Development Bhd-linked corruption trials will conclude tomorrow with the High Court delivering its verdict at the end of the defence case.

Whether former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will be convicted or walk away a free man, all eyes will be on him as Justice Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali is expected to deliver his decision at 10am.

The Pekan MP, who just celebrated his 67th birthday last Thursday, has maintained in his defence that he did not know that the RM42mil – which is the subject matter of the seven charges against him – came from SRC International Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of troubled sovereign wealth fund 1MDB.

Najib was first prosecuted on July 4, 2018, where he claimed trial to a charge of abuse of power and three counts of criminal breach of trust (CBT) for allegedly misappropriating the monies.

On Aug 8, 2018, he appeared in court again for the second time and was charged with three counts of money laundering involving the same RM42mil.

On Nov 11, 2019, the High Court ruled there was a prima facie case against him and he was called to enter his defence.

On Dec 3, the same year, Najib became the first former prime minister in the country's history to take the stand to answer criminal charges against him in a court.

He took to the stand with a 243-page witness statement that was read out over three days.

Najib spoke about how 1MDB

was first set up as the Terengganu Investment Authority (TIA) before it evolved into the 1MDB it is known today, the role of fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho, who is better known as Jho Low, and how SRC International came about.

The court heard how Najib was “shocked” after learning about the RM42mil banked into his personal bank accounts in 2014 and 2015.

His defence team also contended that Najib did not need to lodge a police report over the monies deposited into his accounts as relevant authorities had begun their investigations on the matter.

Throughout its submission, the defence had maintained that Najib was “a victim of a scam” in a series of misrepresentations by the likes of Low as well as another fugitive, former SRC International CEO Nik Faisal Ariff Kamil, other senior

management of SRC International and rogue bankers.

The defence case, which started on Dec 3 last year, lasted 33 days with 19 witnesses taking the stand.

Other high-profile witnesses were former foreign minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman, former minister at the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, former attorney general Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali and former MACC chief commissioners Tan Sri Dzulkipfi Ahmad and Latheefa Koya.

A total of 807 exhibits were tendered in court.

The prosecution had earlier called 57 witnesses to the stand.

Najib faces up to 20 years imprisonment for each of the charges involving CBT and power abuse and up to 15 years imprisonment for each of the money laundering charges, if found guilty.