

Najib, Rosmah, Zahid back in the dock

The Malaysian judiciary is enforcing strict health and safety SOPs and guidelines to reopen court in stages

by RAHIMI YUNUS

HIGH profile criminal proceedings are set to resume after nearly two months halted due to the Movement Control Order (MCO).

Former Prime Minister (PM) Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak's 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) trial will recommence at 2pm tomorrow since being deferred in March.

The defence is expected to resume cross-examining the ninth prosecution witness and former 1MDB CEO Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi when the trial is reopened.

It was initially fixed to restart today, but was pushed to tomorrow to allow Najib to attend the one-day Parliament sitting as requested by the lead defence counsel Tan Sri Dr Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, deputy public prosecutor (DPP) Ahmad Akram Gharib had also

confirmed tomorrow's date with the media.

Before May 18, 1MDB trial had previously been scheduled for May 13 and seen a few series of postponement as the MCO was extended several times.

Najib is facing 25 charges — 21 counts of money laundering involving RM4.3 billion (received and transferred) and four counts of corruption involving RM2.3 billion, linked to 1MDB funds which were deposited into his accounts.

He, who was the chairman of the company's board of advisors while being the then PM and finance minister at the material time, pleaded not guilty.

Meanwhile, Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor is anticipated to return to the courtroom for her solar project trial next month. DPP Ahmad Akram previously said Rosmah's graft case will be heard on July 6-9, 13-16 and 20-23, but these dates were made known before the Conditional MCO was extended until June 9.

Rosmah has been charged with soliciting RM187.5 million and two

counts of receiving a total bribe of RM6.5 million from Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd MD Saidi Abang Samsudin through her former aide Datuk Rizal Mansor concerning a RM1.25 billion solar equipment supply project involving 369 rural schools in Sarawak.

She was accused to have received RM5 million cash from Saidi at her official residence in Putrajaya on Dec 20, 2016, after the Ministry of Education issued the letter of award to Jepak.

Separately, the High Court will be fixing new dates for former deputy PM Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's money laundering cases tomorrow, according to DPP Datuk Raja Rozela Raja Toran as reported by *Bernama*.

Ahmad Zahid is dealing with 47 criminal charges, including 12 counts of criminal breach of trust, eight for corruption and 27 for money laundering involving RM31 million funds of Yayasan Akalbudi, chaired by him.

The prosecution has thus far called 43 witnesses to testify in the trial. The hearing was supposed to

continue on April 13, but it was postponed due to the stay-home orders.

The High Court also had scheduled former Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor's RM2 million bribery case to continue today, *Bernama* reported. DPP Julia Ibrahim said to *Bernama* that the defence is expected to call three more witnesses

Tengku Adnan's graft trial has entered the defence stage since Jan 17, but was disrupted due to the movement restriction measures. He has been charged with receiving RM2 million from Aset Kayamas Sdn Bhd MD Tan Sri Chai Kin Kong over land deals linked to the Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

Separately, the corruption trial of Kinabatangan MP Datuk Seri Bung Moktar Radin and his wife Datin Seri Zizie Ezette Abd Samad had restarted last week.

On May 3 last year, Bung Moktar, who was a former non-executive chairman of Felcra Bhd, pleaded not guilty on two counts of receiving bribes of RM2.2 million and RM262,500 respectively, for obtaining approval for Felcra to make a

RM150 million investment in unit trusts products of Public Mutual Bhd. Zizie Ezette pleaded not guilty of abetting her husband.

Court cases involving political figures were put on hold during the MCO period, but now the judiciary authority and legal fraternity are ready to continue the action as movement restrictions eased.

The Malaysian judiciary is enforcing strict health and safety standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidelines to reopen court in stages beginning Wednesday.

The measures include the compulsory wearing of face masks at all times at court buildings and taking of body temperature before entering the premises.

Only individuals with a body temperature of 38°C and below will be allowed to enter the court premises, according to a statement by the Chief Registrar Office of the Federal Court.

In criminal cases, only one family member will be allowed to enter the court premises and only one client per party would be allowed to be in the court building during the hearing of their case.

The Malaysian Reserve - 18/5/2020 Pg. 4