

MODERATE QUALITY

DISCUSSIONS ON AUDIT REPORT HEARD ON TAPE

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Decision made at 2016 meeting to remove four contentious issues

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AN audio recording of a meeting involving former top government officers — including the then chief secretary to the government, auditor general and the former 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) chief executive officer (CEO) discussing the sovereign wealth fund's final audit report — was heard in the High Court yesterday.

The two-hour recording was that of a meeting that took place at the office of then former chief secretary to the government Tan Sri Ali Hamsa on Feb 24, 2016.

Those present included Ali, his

private secretary, Datuk Norazman Ayob, former auditor general Tan Sri Amrin Buang and one of his officers named Saadatul Nafisah, representatives from the Treasury Datuk Seri Mohamad Isa Hussain and Asri Hamdin, representative from the Attorney-General's office Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad, representative from the Prime Minister's office Tan Sri Shukry Mohd Salleh and former 1MDB CEO Arul Kanda Kandasamy.

It was at this meeting that a decision was made to remove four contentious issues from the 1MDB audit report, which was eventually submitted to the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

One of the main points removed was the presence of fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho, or Jho Low, at 1MDB board of director meetings.

On Tuesday, Ali testified that he had been instructed to convene the meeting as former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak was not happy with the contents of the 2015 1MDB audit report.



In the audio recording, those present could be heard discussing issues concerning 1MDB.

At one stage, Amrin and Saadatul can be heard questioning Arul Kanda at length on issues concerning 1MDB while Ali was heard saying something about national interest.

His statement could not be heard clearly as the audio recording was of moderate quality at best. The judge, along with the prosecution and defence lawyers, had to rely on a transcript to follow what was being said.

However, this too proved to be of little help as the transcript was apparently riddled with mistakes. This was admitted by the



Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the Kuala Lumpur High Court yesterday.
PIC BY ASWADI ALIAS

prosecution from the onset and lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram had undertaken to furnish the court with a fresh transcript next week.

In one part of the recording, Ali was heard saying that copies of the 1MDB audit report should be shredded.

Later, when Sri Ram asked why he had suggested this, Ali said it was to ensure that only one version of the report existed.

"In the end, there should not be two or three versions — only the final version that had been agreed on should be there," he said.

Ali was the fourth prosecution witness to testify in the trial involving Najib and Arul Kanda. Najib, 66, is accused of ordering the 1MDB final audit report to be

tampered with before it was presented to the PAC in 2016.

Arul Kanda, 43, is accused of abetting him. Both face a maximum of 20 years' jail and a fine, or both, upon conviction.

The fifth prosecution witness, National Audit Department director Nor Salwani Muhammad, said Amrin had ordered for an audit to be carried out on 1MDB and its companies following a cabinet decision for the department to verify the fund's accounts.

The department was tasked to prepare a report that was to be tabled to PAC.

She said a special team tasked to do this had sent a final draft for printing on Feb 20, 2016.

The trial before justice Mohamed Zaini Mazlan continues.