

NAJIB'S DEFENCE 'A COCK-AND-BULL STORY'

Ex-PM did nothing about SRC funds deposited into his bank accounts and tried to bury truth, says prosecutor

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LEAD prosecutor Datuk V. Sithambaram did not mince his words when he described Datuk Seri Najib Razak's defence in the SRC International case as nothing but a "cock-and-bull" story.

He said the former prime minister had come up with absurd tales involving fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low and others like his private secretary (the late) Datuk Azlin Alias and SRC executive director Nik Faisal Ariff Kamil to fight his case.

Najib, he said, had tried to

blame them and claimed that he was not aware of transactions involving his personal bank accounts.

However, Sithambaram said it was clear that Najib and Jho Low were actually good friends and it was absurd for the Pekan member of parliament to claim that the financier — who has since gone on the run — had fixed him up.

Touching on the RM42 million SRC funds in Najib's accounts, the senior criminal lawyer, who is acting as a deputy public prosecutor, said Najib's lawyers had argued in court that their client had no knowledge of the money.

The lawyers, he said, had contended that Najib always believed that whatever he spent was actually leftover from the donation he received from Saudi royalty.

"It is absurd for Najib to contend that the actions of Jho Low in putting funds into the personal bank accounts of the (then) sitting prime minister of the country was to trick him into believing that he had funds which he did not!

"It must be remembered that Jho Low, along with Azlin and

Nik Faisal Ariff Kamil, were tasked to ensure sufficient funds were available for him to issue cheques. How can this be a trick?

"It is Najib who is playing a trick to bury the obvious truth. His defence is nothing but a cock-and-bull story," he thundered during the appeal hearing yesterday.

Najib had appealed to overturn his 12-year jail sentence and RM210 million fine after he was found guilty in all seven charges of abuse of power, criminal breach of trust (CBT) and money laundering involving RM42 million of SRC funds.

Sithambaram said evidence had shown that Jho Low was intensely involved in ensuring that there were sufficient funds for Najib to spend.

He pointed out that even Najib had admitted that Jho Low was tasked together with Azlin and Nik Faisal to ensure that sufficient funds were available for him to utilise.

"Whatever Jho Low did was done with the full knowledge of the appellant... Jho Low did not deceive Najib into thinking he had Arab funds in his account.

"It is Najib who is misleading



Datuk V. Sithambaram (centre) arriving at the Putrajaya court yesterday for the hearing of Datuk Seri Najib Razak's appeal in the SRC International case. PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

the court by claiming that he believed the monies he was spending was actually from the Arab donation.

"In actual fact, the funds were from Jho Low, who was bank-rolling Najib. Blaming Jho Low for ensuring that Najib had adequate funds in his personal account is simply outrageous," he said.

Sithambaram said there was no logic in Najib's story as anybody with a simple knowledge of basic mathematics would have known that the RM42 million was not from Saudi royalty, as the donation money had dried up much earlier.

He said evidence had shown that Najib did nothing after he was informed that funds from SRC were deposited into his personal bank accounts.

He said although Najib expressed shock and said he was upset when told so, he elected to do absolutely nothing about it.

"He did not lodge any police reports of these wrongful deposits into his bank accounts... he

did not make any enquiries with the bank... he did not file a complaint with the bank... he did not even attempt to take any legal action against the bank to establish the alleged unauthorised financial transactions in and out of his accounts, which exposed him to a financial scandal and the commission of criminal offences.

"As the then sitting PM of Malaysia, he did nothing. This was not a small change of RM42 million, whereby he failed to do anything.

"This was not an innocent omission or error by the appellant, but a deliberate scheme to enrich himself with the funds belonging to SRC," he said, adding that by his own conduct, Najib has proved that he had knowledge, and thus, had committed the CBT offences.

The hearing before Court of Appeal judges Datuk Abdul Karim Abdul Jalil, Datuk Has Zanah Mehat and Datuk Vazeer Alam Mydin Meera continues.