

'SAUDI DONATION STORY A JOKE'

Prosecutor queries why Najib was secretive about contribution if it was Legitimate

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LEAD prosecutor Datuk V. Sithambaram yesterday tore into Datuk Seri Najib Razak's story of receiving donations from a Saudi Arabian royal and later returning the money, which the lawyer said ended up in a Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low-linked company.

He said Najib's story was to cover up how SRC International Sdn Bhd's money ended up in the former prime minister's accounts.

The deputy public prosecutor said Najib's claim that a Saudi royal had banked the money into his personal bank accounts but he later decided to send it back was nothing short of a joke.

"He claims the Saudi king gave him the donation and it was banked into his personal bank accounts.

"However, he later decided to send it back because it would blow up into a political issue.

"This is a joke... it appears the money was put into secret bank accounts," he said.



Former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the Palace of Justice in Putrajaya yesterday, PIC BY

MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

Sithambaram also ripped Najib's assertion that the money was returned.

He said doing so would have been nothing short of an insult to the Saudis.

Najib, Sithambaram said, had all this while claimed the Saudi king had given him billions in donation as a recognition of his achievements in turning Malaysia into a progressive Muslim nation.

"My question is, why then return the money? Why fear anyone finding out that it was in his accounts?"

"He was not given the money because he is Datuk Seri Najib Razak. He was given the money because he was the prime minister of Malaysia.

"He could have been open and transparent about it... tell everyone the source of the funds. Instead, he did not tell anyone. The

cabinet did not know anything about it... no one knew," Sithambaram said, adding that Najib had transferred the money out to avoid queries on why and how he had such large sums in his accounts.

Sithambaram said Najib later claimed that he returned the money, but it was actually sent to a company called Tanore Finance Corporation.

He said there had never been

any confirmation through official channels about the Arab donations, as would normally occur between leaders of sovereign nations when such a large donation was given.

"It is rather odd for a donation to be returned to the sender without any explanation or a thanking letter.

"This act itself shows that the 'Arab funds' were never a donation to start with. It looks more like a scam."

Sithambaram said Najib's explanation about receiving donations from the Saudis was also too incredible to believe as they seemed to know when to bank in money whenever he was low in funds.

He said the required funds would magically appear in Najib's accounts at the exact moment they were needed, usually when the accounts were very low or overdrawn.

"The contributor of the funds would certainly want the appellant, as the prime minister of Malaysia, to know of his contribution.

"Yet, there is no contact between the donor and the appellant before the arrival of the funds," he added.

Sithambaram said this in his submissions in Najib's appeal against his sentence and conviction of seven charges involving abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering involving RM42 million of SRC funds.