

# 'ARAB DONATION DEFENCE TOPS 'ARABIAN NIGHTS' TALE'

It is nothing but a concoction that is bereft of credibility, says Court of Appeal bench

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**D**ATUK Seri Najib Razak's Arab donation story to justify millions that flowed into his personal bank accounts was described as a tale that surpassed even those from the *Arabian Nights*.

A panel of Court of Appeal

judges who presided over the former prime minister's SRC International Sdn Bhd corruption case said the Arab donation story had reared its head in the trial and had been dealt with very clinically by High Court judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali, who convicted Najib in July last year.

"This tale that surpassed even those from the *Arabian Nights* not only lacked credibility, but was contradicted and dispelled by the documentary evidence," wrote the judges, comprising Datuk Abdul Karim Abdul Jalil, Datuk Has Zanah Mehat and Datuk Vazeer Alam Mydin Meera, in their 318-page grounds of judgment.

The judges had, on Wednesday, dismissed Najib's appeal against his conviction, 12-year jail sentence and a RM210 million fine handed down by Nazlan after the

former prime minister was found guilty of all seven charges of abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering involving RM42 million of SRC funds.

The judges noted that factual circumstances concerning the alleged Arab donations or the personal donations from Saudi king, the late King Abdullah, were dealt with by Nazlan.

Karim said Najib's defence was that he honestly believed that the SRC funds of RM42 million which flowed into his personal accounts were part of the Arab donation monies.

However, he said, evidence showed that Najib had, in 2013, returned US\$620 million to an outfit which made the transfer to his accounts, but he accepted a further RM49 million from al-

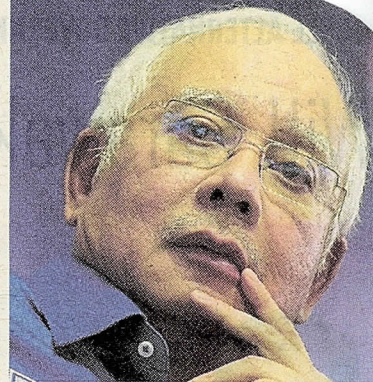
leged Arab sources barely a year later.

It was also noted that bank statements showed that by October 2014, the alleged donations from the remittances from 2011 to 2013 had been substantially used up. Therefore, the judges said, the RM49 million which ended in Najib's account in 2014 could not have been part of the Arab donation monies.

Evidence showed that Najib had also spent almost RM136 million from late December 2014 to February 2015.

"He was the then serving prime minister. There was much public controversy over the matter.

"Yet he chose not to lodge any report with the bank or the authorities when that would have been the very first and obvious thing to do, especially when Najib



Datuk Seri Najib Razak

had been publicly accused, including in the international media, of committing financial crimes.

"It does, therefore, appear that Najib had deliberately chosen not to do anything regarding the matter as he knew that this would expose his involvement in a criminal activity," Karim said.

The bench, he said, unanimously agreed with Nazlan that Najib's Arab donation story was nothing but a concoction that was completely bereft of any credibility.

He said there was no evidence at all that the RM42 million came from, or could have come from, the Saudi monarch.

"The funds came from SRC and that is well established."

NST- 10/12/2021 P3-9