

# 1MDB trial snag as Najib flagged

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## Former PM's MySejahtera status says he is 'person under surveillance'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The RM2.28bil 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) trial involving Datuk Seri Najib Razak hit a snag following the change in his and his lawyer's MySejahtera status.

The hearing, which was scheduled to resume yesterday after a one-month break, was adjourned to today after the court was informed that the Pekan MP had been flagged as a "person under surveillance" (PUS) in his MySejahtera app.

Najib, who was initially not allowed in court as his status was PUS, had appeared briefly in court in the morning. He was allowed in by security personnel after he was prompted to update the app.

His lead counsel, Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee, who had a casual contact status, was also prompted to update his app.

This caused their statuses to turn to blue (low risk) and they were allowed entry.

However, the High Court was informed by Najib's lawyer Datuk Hariharan Tara Singh that the two were questioned again about their statuses and after answering the question-and-answer segment in the app, which the two answered correctly, the status had "flipped back to the original position".

"They were informed by court interpreters that if one is a casual contact or PUS, they should step aside," Hariharan told the court



here yesterday.

High Court judge Justice Collin Lawrence Sequerah ordered for Najib and Muhammad Shafee to take the antigen rapid test kit (RTK), for the Health Ministry to be informed of the test results, and to see if this would result in any change to their MySejahtera status.

"When the results come out, if it is negative, can they inform the Health Ministry so their statuses can be reassessed?" he said.

When the matter was called up again, Hariharan told the court that the test results came back negative, but this did not change their statuses on the app.

"According to the guidelines by the Health Ministry, if you are a casual or close contact, it appears that you need to undergo quarantine for a period of 10 days.

"They have to do self-quarantine as a social responsibility. This is the standard operating procedure,"

said Hariharan.

Justice Sequerah then adjourned the proceedings to today for the defence to update the court on both Najib's and Muhammad Shafee's status.

The court earlier heard from deputy public prosecutor Ahmad Akram Gharib that two prosecution witnesses, former 1MDB chairman Tan Sri Bakke Salleh and Najib's special officer Datuk Wan Shihab Wan Ismail, were unavailable.

He said two other witnesses, former 1MDB CEO Mohd Hazem Abdul Rahman and former CFO Azmi Tahir, who are the 12th and 13th prosecution witnesses, were present in court yesterday for the defence to continue its cross-examination on them.

In light of the situation, DPP Ahmad Akram said the prosecution had received instructions from lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram to apply to the court for the trial to be conducted remotely in hybrid proceedings, which had been done before by the Court of Appeal involving the SRC International Sdn Bhd case.

"This is in line with Section 15A of the Court of Judicature Act that allows for virtual proceedings to take place," he added.

In the SRC case last week, a panel of appellate court judges and the prosecution team were in court while Najib and his defence team appeared virtually.

Hariharan objected to the application on grounds that the defence would not be able to consult with their client if they were to attend the proceedings separately virtually due to Najib being under quarantine.

"It's just impossible and it will be prejudicial to Najib," he added.

Justice Sequerah said he would decide on the prosecution's application for hybrid proceedings today.

Najib, 68, is facing multiple charges involving bribery and money laundering.

### Checkpoint:

Najib (left) and Shafee showing their MySejahtera status upon arriving at the Kuala Lumpur Courts Complex. — MUHAMAD SHAHRIL ROSLI/The Star