

Jho Low was the 'PM's man'

Witness tells court that the two were 'very, very close'

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KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court has been told that former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had never dissociated himself from fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho, better known as Jho Low, and that the two had a "very, very close" relationship.

Former 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) chief executive officer Mohd Hazem Abd Rahman said this during a re-examination by lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram in the RM2.28bil 1MDB trial involving Najib.

The 10th prosecution witness was asked yesterday about a meeting that took place at Najib's house in Taman Duta on Nov 28, 2013 at

which Low and Mohd Hazem were present.

Mohd Hazem agreed to Sri Ram's suggestion that Najib had never said or done anything to dissociate himself from Low during the meeting.

Sri Ram: When you had the meeting at the accused's house, Low was present. From your observation, what was the relationship between the accused and Jho Low?

Mohd Hazem: It was very, very close.

The witness, when asked if he was ever told by Najib not to take instructions from Low, said: "No."

Sri Ram: Why would you follow the instruction from Jho Low?

Mohd Hazem: Jho Low is basically the man of the prime minister.

However, in contrast to the

openness involving Low in private meetings, Mohd Hazem admitted that Low's name was "concealed" in a meeting that he attended with audit firm KPMG to discuss 1MDB's audit.

Sri Ram: You didn't expose Jho Low (in the meeting).

Mohd Hazem: Yes. It was an open instruction by Jho Low not to reveal his name.

On the removal of KPMG as 1MDB's auditor, the witness said it was because KPMG did not want to close and sign off on the company's financial year 2013 audit report.

He added that he was pressured to find a way to solve the conundrum and the only way to solve it was by replacing KPMG with a new auditor.

Sri Ram: The pressure came

from who?

Mohd Hazem: The prime minister. I was called directly by him to ask for an update on the closure of the audit.

Sri Ram: Were you in a position to disobey the accused?

Mohd Hazem: No, absolutely not.

Najib, 68, is facing four charges of abusing his position to obtain gratification totalling RM2.28bil in 1MDB funds and 21 counts of money laundering involving the same money.

The hearing continues before Justice Collin Lawrence Sequerah today.

Watch the video
TheStarTV.com



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