

BAKKE: JHO LOW WAS NAJIB'S REP

Fugitive financier has been associated with Najib since before he was PM, court hears

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A FORMER 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) board member yesterday said it was not a

mere impression that fugitive financier Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low represented Najib in matters relating to the sovereign wealth fund.

Tan Sri Mohd Bakke Salleh said that based on his observations, Jho Low was indeed the coordinator and representative of the former prime minister.

Bakke said he had even spotted Jho Low in Najib's office since the latter was defence minister and deputy prime minister.

He said Najib had once even told him to work with Jho Low in the setting up of 1MDB's predecessor company, the Terengganu



Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex yesterday. PIC BY FATHIL ASRI

Investment Authority (TIA).

Bakke said Terengganu ruler Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin had appointed him and several others to the TIA steering committee in early 2009 and Jho Low was appointed as its adviser.

Replying to a question from Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muham-

mad Shafee Abdullah, Bakke said Jho Low never had any official position in 1MDB.

Later, Bakke also related how the 1MDB board was unhappy about losses incurred following the issuance of the Islamic Medium Term Notes (IMTN), but Najib had then told him not to delve too

much into the matter.

Instead, he said Najib wanted the 1MDB board to speed up plans for a joint venture (JV) with PetroSaudi International (PSI) Limited, which required 1MDB to pump in US\$1 billion.

Bakke said this happened before a board meeting on Sept 26,

2009, when Jho Low handed his mobile phone to him and said the prime minister was on the line.

"He (Najib) told me not to spend too much time looking at past transactions, but instead focus on the JV with PSI.

"He said he wanted to witness the signing of the JV between 1MDB and PSI as soon as possible."

Bakke had previously told the court that Low attended the 1MDB board meeting on Sept 26, 2009.

However, Jho Low's presence at the meeting was removed in the National Audit Department's (NAD) audit report on 1MDB on the grounds that it was a sensitive issue and to allegedly prevent the opposition from spinning the facts.

The other items that were removed were two 1MDB 2014 financial statements, the issuance of IMTN and the Islamic bonds' secondary subscriber.

Bakke was testifying in Najib's trial over the tampering of the 1MDB audit report.

Former 1MDB chief executive officer Arul Kanda Kandasamy was accused of abetting him.

The trial before High Court judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan resumes on April 12.