

'I THOUGHT NAJIB WANTED DEAL'

Ex-board member describes Jho Low's phone call to former PM on PetroSaudi venture

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A FORMER director of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) said he had the impression Datuk Seri Najib Razak wanted a joint venture deal with PetroSaudi International Ltd (PSI) to be sealed based on a phone call that was made by fugitive financier Jho Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low to the then prime minister.

Former 1MDB board member Tan Sri Ismee Ismail said Jho Low had passed the phone to the then 1MDB chairman Tan Sri Mohd Bakke Salleh before the board meeting started on Sept 26, 2009, and based on his recollection, Bakke had later remarked that the prime minister "wants us to do this".

"The impression I got is the PM wanted it done," he said when cross-examined by Najib's lead



Former 1MDB board member Tan Sri Ismee Ismail arriving at the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex yesterday, PIC BY EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN



counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah.

Earlier, the issue of

Jho Low's presence at the 1MDB board meeting and how his name was eventually omitted from the records was also raised in the trial involving misuse of 1MDB funds by Najib.

Zooming in on the events which happened on that day, Shafee noted that there were no questions raised about Jho Low's presence at the meeting by anyone, to which Ismee agreed.

Ismee also agreed that nobody questioned what Jho Low was supposed to do there, but he as-

sumed it was to enlighten the board on the proposed joint venture that 1MDB had planned to enter with PSI.

However, he said Jho Low ended up not uttering a single word in the meeting, and that the entrepreneur also did not stay long.

"I also don't remember asking him anything. The meeting went on, but he walked out not too long after we started. However, nothing is stated in the minutes when he left."

Ismee also agreed with Shafee that Jho Low did not sign the attendance list on that day and that the meeting had a full board attendance.

On the issue of two versions of the minutes of the meeting, one where Jho Low's name was omitted, Ismee said he did not know who could have removed the fugitive's name.

"I don't know... if I can make it clear, as far as I am concerned, this is the original list (the one with Jho Low's name)," he said in the trial where Najib was charged with four counts of using his position to obtain bribes of RM2.3 billion in 1MDB funds and 21 counts of money laundering involving the same amount.

The trial before High Court judge Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah continues.