

SEMI-FINAL

EX-CFO: I DIDN'T ATTEND WORLD CUP WITH JHO LOW

Azmi Tahir denies flying with fugitive in latter's private jet to watch match in Brazil in 2014

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THE former chief financial officer (CFO) of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) was yesterday forced to deflect questions about the luxurious treatment and perks he allegedly enjoyed when working for the company, including trips on private jets with fugitive financier Low Taek Jho @ Jho Low.

Azmi Tahir, however, denied he had made such trips with the now wanted billionaire.



The accountant also denied that he had flown with Jho Low in the latter's private jet to watch the 2014 football World Cup semi-final match between Brazil and Germany.

On the contrary, Azmi said he had never even been to Brazil.

He maintained this despite persistent questions about his alleged Brazil trip by Datuk Seri Najib Razak's lead counsel, Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah.



Datuk Seri Najib Razak (centre) arriving at the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex yesterday; (inset) Azmi Tahir, pic by mcthamad shahril badri saali

Shafee asked Azmi about the luxurious treatment he received courtesy of Jho Low after first asking the latter about the Brazil trip for the football match.

When Azmi denied having gone there, Shafee demanded that the prosecution witness produce his passport in court to back his claim.

Shafee: I have details that in 2014, you attended the World Cup match in Brazil. You went there with Jho Low in his private jet. Former 1MDB chief executive Mohd Hazem Abdul Rahman and then 1MDB chief investment officer Vincent Koh were also there.

Azmi: I disagree

Shafee: Can you produce your passport so we can see the trips you made in 2014?

Azmi: I will need to look for it. I am not sure if I still have it.

(Deputy public prosecutor Mohamad Mustafa P. Kunyalam informed the court after the lunch break that Azmi had failed to locate his passport.)

Shafee: If you don't have your passport, can you give consent for the Immigration department to release information about your travels in 2014, particularly on the trips to Brazil?

Azmi: No, I cannot give consent as it is private and personal information

Shafee moves on to ask Azmi if he had received other gifts from Jho Low, including first-class or premium seats for Formula 1 Grand Prix races in Singapore and Abu Dhabi.

Azmi said this never happened

although he had once met Aabar Investments PJS chief executive Mohamed Badawy Al-Husseiny, who arranged for the FI tickets.

"I don't know if it was premium seats though. They looked the same to me. It was just higher than the rest of the seats."

Azmi was cross-examined by Shafee in Najib's trial where the former prime minister is on trial for 25 charges of abuse of power and money laundering involving 1MDB funds amounting to RM2.28 billion which were deposited into his personal bank accounts between February 2011 and December 2014.

The hearing before judge Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah continues on May 9, when lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram re-examines Azmi.