

'Najib made me 1MDB adviser out of the goodness of his heart'

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KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court yesterday heard that Datuk Seri Najib Razak had given former chief secretary to the government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan a high-paying, non-existent advisory role in 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) out of the goodness of his heart.

Lamenting that the issue of his appointment as 1MDB adviser in 2010 had been given widespread media coverage following his testimony on Tuesday, Sidek reiterated that he believed Najib only appointed him because of his low take-home pay as the then chief secretary to the government.

He spoke about the matter again during cross-examination by Najib's lead counsel, Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah.

Shafee touched on the issue and asked Sidek to confirm that Najib appointed him as a member of the 1MDB board of advisers because of his role as chief secretary to the government.

However, Sidek clarified the move was to supplement his civil service pay.

"I hate it because it is all over the papers... My Lord, today —

my salary, from what I said, the PM then thought it was a bit low for the responsibilities I had.

"I knew that because I joined Petronas after that. I was only getting RM29,125 monthly as chief secretary to the government."

Sidek said Najib spoke to him and said he thought the salary paid to the chief secretary was a bit low and he should be compensated in other ways.

"So, out of the goodness of his heart... I thought that was the reason, this was just a vehicle to compensate for that low salary.

"It was not because I was KSN (chief secretary) that I was offered (the role)," said Sidek, who was Petronas chairman from July 1, 2012, until June 30, 2018.

It was reported that Sidek had formerly served in the civil service for 38 years, and was the 12th chief secretary to the government from September 2006 until his retirement in June 2012.

He testified on Tuesday that 1MDB paid him RM30,000 monthly as an advisory fee from July 2010 until December 2012. The amount was subsequently reduced to RM10,000 per month from Jan-



Former chief secretary to the government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan arriving at the Kuala Lumpur Courts Complex yesterday. PIC BY SAIFULLIZAN TAMADI

uary 2013 until June 2015.

When re-examined by lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram, Sidek noted that the cabinet had previously talked about the use of 1MDB funds to finance projects in various parliamentary constituencies held by various

Barisan Nasional (BN) ministers.

He said this when asked by Sri Ram why he had the impression that 1MDB was set up as an entity to raise political funds for BN.

Najib is on trial for 25 charges of abuse of power and money laundering over 1MDB funds amount-

ing to RM2.28 billion that were deposited into his personal bank accounts between February 2011 and December 2014.

The trial before High Court judge Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah continues. **By Sharanjit Singh**