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Witness: Over RM45 million transferred into Najib's personal account

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court heard yesterday that RM45.8 million was transferred into Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak's AmBank account from Vista Equity International Partners Ltd (Barbados) between October and December 2014.

Ambank (M) Berhad Treasury Operations Department vice-president Salmah Daman Huri, 50, who is the 23rd prosecution witness, said the funds totalling £8,706,021.92 (RM45,837,485.70 at the conversion rate at the material time), were transferred into the former premier's account in five transactions.

Vista Equity is a shell company owned and controlled by Eric Tan, a trusted associate of fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho.

"A sum of RM30,032,250 was transferred

on Oct 23, 2014, and RM3,624,473.70 and RM11,567.57 on Nov 24 and 26 respectively.

"Two other transactions of RM5,360,065 and RM6,809,129.43 took place on Dec 10 and 18," said Salmah in the former prime minister's trial over the misappropriation of RM2.3 billion in funds from 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

Salmah confirmed five documents, which all showed transfers from Vista Equity through Amicorp Bank and Trust Ltd in Barbados via Standard Chartered Bank in London before it reached the same "AmPrivate Banking - 1MY" account.

On the first day of the trial, the prosecution said it would show that 1MDB funds had been transferred in multiple transactions to Najib's accounts, namely US\$20 million (equivalent to

RM60,629,839.43) in the first phase, US\$30 million (equivalent to RM90,899,927.28) in the second phase, US\$681 million (equivalent to RM2,081,476,926) in the third phase and transactions in British pounds that were equivalent to RM4,093,500 and RM45,837,485.70 or a combined total of RM49,930,985.70 in the fourth phase.

During cross-examination by Najib's counsel Wan Aizuddin Wan Mohammed, Salmah said no red flags were raised by Bank Negara Malaysia or AmBank when the transactions took place.

She also said she was unaware that the account belonged to Najib at the material time and she only learnt about it following investigations by the authorities.

Salmah also testified that she could not confirm that the foreign exchange

transactions came from Najib, as her department dealt with the account holder's relationship manager over those transactions.

When re-examined by senior deputy public prosecutor (DPP) Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram, the witness said usually, the bank would send statements to customers at the end of the month to notify them of the balances in their accounts.

To another question by DPP Najwa Bistamam, Salmah said Najib never raised any reports against the said transactions to the bank.

Najib, 68, is facing four charges of using his position to obtain bribes amounting to RM2.3 billion and 21 charges of money laundering involving the same amount.

- Bernama