

# APPEALS COURT DENIES NAJIB BID TO HALT TRIAL

**Court finds no compelling reason to grant stay pending ex-PM's appeal to recuse judge**

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**D**ATUK Seri Najib Razak failed in his bid to halt his corruption trial for misappropriating funds belonging to 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

The Court of Appeal yesterday dismissed Najib's application to seek a stay in proceedings pending his appeal to recuse presiding judge Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah.

A three-member bench led by Datuk Hadhariah Syed Ismail ruled there were no special circumstances to allow Najib's application.

"We are of the view that public interest demands that the case proceeds.

"It (the trial) is already at an advanced stage, as 46 witnesses have

testified with 173 days of trial.

"There is no compelling reason to grant a stay," Hadhariah said.

Counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah represented Najib as his lead counsel, while deputy public prosecutor Kamal Baharin Omar appeared for the prosecution.

Shafee said the defence would file a fresh application to stay the proceedings at the Federal Court.

Last week, Sequerah dismissed Najib's application to recuse him over his relationship with former 1MDB general counsel Jasmine Loo Ai Swan.

Sequerah, in his ruling, said there had been no communication between them since Loo left the firm they worked at 15 years ago.

He said there was no nexus between the issues in the trial and the past relationship between him and his former partner in legal practice.



Loo's name was heavily mentioned during Najib's ongoing trial for allegedly misappropriating RM2.3 billion from 1MDB.

It was reported that she was among the proxies working with fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho to misappropriate millions of ringgit from the fund.

Sequerah also dismissed Shafee's application to stay the proceedings pending appeal at the Court of Appeal.

Najib, 70, is facing four charges of using his position to obtain bribes totalling RM2.3 billion from 1MDB funds and 21 charges of money laundering involving the same amount.