

MONEY MEANT FOR NAJIB?

Guan Eng's lawyer highlights keywords in WhatsApp conversation

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A WHATSAPP conversation between two businessmen became the highlight of DAP chair-

man Lim Guan Eng's corruption trial involving the Penang Undersea Tunnel project yesterday.

The chat between Consortium Zenith Construction Sdn Bhd (CZCSB) director Datuk Zarul Ahmad Mohd Zulkifli and G. Gnanaraja involved the RM2 million bribes purportedly for the former

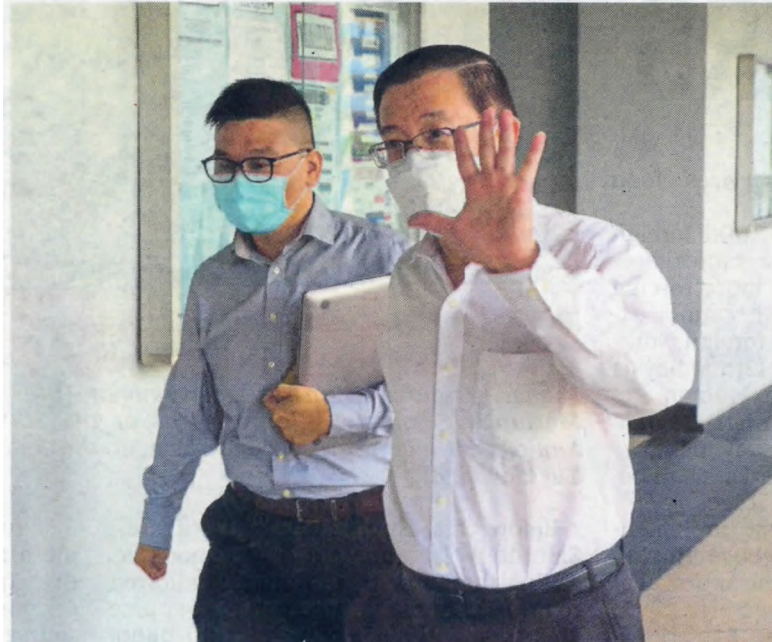
Penang chief minister.

Lim's counsel, Gobind Singh Deo, contended that the monies were not meant to be given to his client, but for then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak instead.

Gobind highlighted several words used by the two in the WhatsApp chat, which included "big boss", "chocolate" and

"Taman Duta"

Zarul had earlier testified that the term "chocolate" referred to bribes and "big boss" referred to the former prime minister and finance minister.



DAP chairman Lim Guan Eng arriving at the Sessions Court in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

Gobind, reading out the WhatsApp conversation, said that on July 23, 2017, at 9.41am, Gnanaraja had messaged Zarul to say: "Good morning, Datuk. Had a good birthday cutting cake at 12am with the big boss"

He said the businessman later wrote: "I will be seeing him again at 4.30pm later. I have already briefed him on our matter and he said he will brief me later. I will see you after Taman Duta."

Gobind said Zarul then replied: "Do you still need me before that? I still have the chocolates I want

to pass you."

Gobind said Lim was neither born on July 23 nor did he live in Taman Duta.

"Are you able to say that the 'big boss' was the then prime minister?" Gobind said when cross-examining Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) forensics department investigating officer Wan Mohd Firdaus Wan Yusof.

This prompted deputy public prosecutor (DPP) Mohd Akram Gharib to object to the line of questioning, stating that the de-

fence was making an unsubstantiated claim.

However, Sessions Court Judge Azura Alwi allowed Gobind's question, to which the witness replied in the negative.

Wan Firdaus, during re-examination by DPP Datuk Wan Sharuddin Wan Ladin, also confirmed that the WhatsApp messages never mentioned that the RM2 million was given to Lim.

Gobind had on Tuesday alleged that prosecution witnesses were being untruthful when they testified in Lim's corruption trial.

Gobind claimed that Zarul and his two subordinates, Ibrahim Sahari and Azli Adam, had given contradicting statements in court.

He said the trio had been called to testify in the Shah Alam Sessions Court in relation to RM19 million cheating case against businessman Datuk Seri G. Gnanaraja. He said the witnesses, when testifying in Shah Alam court, had said that the RM2 million was not meant for Lim.

Lim is facing four charges of using his position as the then Penang chief minister to solicit gratification to help Zarul's company secure the undersea tunnel project.

He is also accused of receiving RM3.3 million for himself and causing two plots of land belonging to the state government to be disposed of to two companies linked to the tunnel project.

Trial continues on Feb 15.