

NAJIB'S HEARING POSTPONED

Trial resumes on Thursday to allow prosecution team to attend Sri Ram's funeral

RAHMAT KHAIRULRIJAL
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

DATUK Seri Najib Razak's 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) corruption trial began yesterday with the High Court being informed about the death of lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram.

Deputy public prosecutor Ahmad Akram Gharib stood up at the onset of the hearing and told judge Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah that Sri Ram had passed away on Sunday.

Akram sought to vacate the trial date for yesterday and today for the prosecution team to at-

tend Sri Ram's funeral.

Akram said the team wanted to attend the former's wake and cremation in Shah Alam today.

"In light of the sudden demise of Sri Ram yesterday (Sunday), we humbly seek your lordship's indulgence to allow for an adjournment for today's proceeding as the team will have to discuss the redistribution of various focus of work vis-a-vis the witnesses.

"For tomorrow (adjournment), the wake is from morning until 1pm for non-family members to pay their last respects.

"We have been informed the

cortege will leave at 2pm for the cremation in Shah Alam.

"We are seeking your lordship's permission to vacate this matter to allow us to be there for both functions.

"He was our leader and he was like a father to all of us.

"We would really like to be there," he said.

Najib's lawyer Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah did not object to the application.

"We would like to extend our condolences to the prosecution team," he said.

The court allowed the appli-

cation and the hearing continues on Thursday. -

Sri Ram, 79, a former Federal Court judge, was admitted to the intensive care unit of a private hospital here last week for a lung infection.

He was the lead prosecutor in the 1MDB trial and also led the prosecution of Najib's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, in cases involving corruption in a hybrid-solar power project for 369 rural schools in Sarawak and money laundering amounting to RM7 million.

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.

