

'Najib thought firm owned by Saudi king'

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak believed the millions in funds he received from Blackstone Asia Real Estate Partners Ltd (Blackstone) were owned by the late King Abdullah Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.

It was revealed that Blackstone was a shell company set up by fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho, or Jho Low, to mimic private equity real estate firm Blackstone Real Est and siphon off millions of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) funds.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) senior officer Nur Aida Arifin on Friday said the former prime minister, during the investigation, was never shown documents indicating Blackstone belonged to Low.

She said this when testifying under cross-examination by Najib's counsel, Wan Azwan Aiman Wan Fakhruddin, in Najib's corruption trial for misappropriating millions of funds belonging to the

sovereign state fund.

She agreed with Wan Azwan's contention that Najib never told Blackstone beneficiary Eric Tan Kim Loon — believed to be one of Low's proxies — to transfer RM90.9 million to his AmBank account in 2012.

Wan Aiman: Najib, during interrogation, said he believed that Blackstone was owned by the late King Abdullah?

Nur Aida: Yes.

Wan Aiman: He (Najib) was never shown any document to indicate that Eric Tan was a beneficiary of Blackstone?

Nur Aida: I agree.

Wan Aiman: The MACC also did not record any statement from Eric Tan regarding the transaction.

Nur Aida: Yes.

On Sept 19 last year, Bank Negara analyst Adam Ariff Mohd Roslan, 29, when testifying as a witness in the same trial, said Najib received US\$30 million from Blackstone in 2012 in two tranch-

es: US\$5 million on Oct 30 and US\$25 million on Nov 19.

“Standard Chartered bank's record for ordering customer Blackstone Asia Real Estate Partners confirm that the beneficiary account for both transfers is account number ‘2112022009694’ held under the name ‘AmPrivate Banking – MR’ with AmIslamic.

“Examination of the bank statement and records dated on Oct 31, 2012 and Nov 20, 2012 for the account number 2112022009694 maintained in the name of ‘AmPrivate Banking – MR and/or Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak’ provided by AmIslamic, matched the transfers.”

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.

The hearing before judge Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah continues.