

Najib silent on Saudi king

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Witness: Purported meeting only came up during defence hearing

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak had never spoken about meeting the late King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia in 2010 where the king purportedly pledged to give donations to the former prime minister, says a Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) investigating officer.

Senior officer Nur Aida Arifin, 37, testified at the High Court here yesterday that during the course of her investigation into the misappropriation of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) funds, Najib did not disclose the meeting to her.

The meeting was said to have

been held in January 2010 in Riyadh.

Najib was said to be accompanied by former foreign affairs minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman, former Malaysian ambassador to Saudi Arabia Prof Datuk Syed Omar Al-Saggaf, and former Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom.

Najib's lead counsel, Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, asked Nur Aida why MACC did not record statements from Anifah, Jamil and Syed Omar, to which Nur Aida replied that the issue did not arise then.

The witness said the Saudi meeting only came up during the defence hearing in the SRC International Sdn Bhd case.

"There were no issues (about the meeting). Najib's statement to the MACC also did not mention this. It was only during the SRC trial when this issue came up," she said.

Nur Aida also said Najib was free to add any details to his statement to the MACC, but he did not.

"It is for him to bring up to defend himself," she added.

In the SRC International trial, Jamil testified that he was present when Najib and King Abdullah met.

Jamil said King Abdullah decided to directly transfer monetary aid to Najib's personal bank account instead of a political organisation to avoid complications about how it should be spent

during a private chat after an informal meeting with the Malaysian delegates to Riyadh on Jan 11, 2010.

Najib made an official visit to the country between Jan 13 and 16, 2010.

During the meeting, Jamil said the king had told Najib that he would send the money to the latter's private account to strengthen political ties between them.

Najib, 70, is on trial for 25 charges in total – four for abuse of power that allegedly brought him financial benefit to the tune of RM2.28bil and 21 for money laundering involving the same amount of money.

The hearing continues today before Justice Collin Lawrence Sequerah.