

NAJIB: IT'S NOT MY SIGNATURE

He denies meeting ex-1 MDB chief executive Shahrol to endorse decision on GDF Suez investment

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DATUK Seri Najib Razak yesterday revealed that his signature on 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) meeting minutes was forged, the High Court heard.

The former prime minister made this claim during his corruption trial involving the strategic development company, in response to a question from his lead counsel, Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, about identifying the document.

The senior lawyer was referring to a meeting cited by former 1MDB chief executive Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi, who testified as a key prosecution witness in the trial.

"No, it is not my signature. I can confidently say it is not mine because I did not attend this meeting with him (Shahrol).

"Shahrol misled the board of directors (BOD) by claiming that he had a meeting with me and that I agreed to endorse the BOD's decision to proceed with the GDF Suez investment," he said before presiding judge Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah.

Shahrol in his testimony claimed that the former finance minister agreed to the proposal and instructed the 1MDB management to analyse risks and con-

duct due diligence.

"The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) intentionally avoided confronting me with the document during the recording of my statement because they were aware I would explain that I never had a meeting with Shahrol," he said.

Najib cited a Quranic verse to former 1MDB director Tan Sri Ismee Ismail, accusing him of lying in his testimony that Najib had influenced the company's decision to allocate RM1.5 billion to its joint venture account with PetroSaudi International.

"Ismee testified that the 1MDB board of directors believed selling a 40 per cent stake in the joint venture company, in exchange for an annual profit of eight percent over 11 years based on the value of the US\$1.2 billion murabaha notes, was a sound decision.

"It is clear that Ismee and the BOD made the decision based on their evaluation and judgment, not due to any purported influence on my part.

"I am deeply disappointed by Ismee's attempt to unfairly implicate me by suggesting that the BOD made the decision as they were influenced by what they believed I wanted.

"I never expected such a distortion of the truth from someone like Ismee whom I have always regarded as a man of integrity."

Earlier, Najib had accused the MACC of being used as a political weapon to suppress and eliminate rivals, the High Court heard.

The former prime minister also criticised the Attorney-General's Chambers (A-GC), alleging that it is pursuing a political agenda

rather than upholding truth and justice.

The 70-year-old said this in his witness statement in his defence against all power abuse and money laundering charges involving RM2.3 billion of 1MDB funds.

He made the remarks after his lead counsel, Shafee, said the anti-graft body had declined to indict Shahrol for his role in the company's massive financial debacle.

Earlier, Najib told the High Court that only fools would believe he would jeopardise his 40-year political career for a US\$20 million kickback, the High Court heard yesterday.

He denied pressuring 1MDB executives to enter into a joint venture (JV) with PetroSaudi International Ltd, which allegedly caused the company to incur losses of US\$1 billion.

The former prime minister said documents produced in court clearly showed that the 1MDB's board of directors was already ready to participate in the JV with PetroSaudi International prior to his brief exchange with 1MDB's former chairman Tan Sri Mohd Bakke Salleh on Sept 26, 2009.

The prosecution in its case against Najib had contended that he had pressured 1MDB top management to enter into the JV through a phone call with Bakke organised by fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho, better known as Jho Low.

Najib 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.

