

Najib: I never made nasi goreng or soup for Jho Low

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak said fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho had betrayed his trust and exploited their professional relationship to orchestrate fraudulent schemes involving 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

The former prime minister painted a picture of manipulation and deceit, describing how Low's polished demeanour and web of high-level connections led him to believe the financier was a trusted ally in advancing the nation's global standing.

"While I do not deny that on certain occasions Low was present at my residence in Langgak Duta, it is important to understand the context of my interactions with him during that time.

"My confidence in Low arose from the compelling image he projected as a highly capable and well-connected individual.

"He came with strong endorsements, including from our king at the time, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, and demonstrated an exceptional ability to unlock opportunities that appeared to benefit Malaysia, such as Mubadala's US\$500 million investment in the Iskandar project in Johor."

The 71-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 said Low's connections include the royal families of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates.

"I had no reason to doubt his intentions or actions. My interactions with him were always guided by what I believed to be in the best interests of Malaysia."

Najib said Low also demonstrated his resourcefulness during the Arab Spring crisis in Egypt, helping evacuate thousands of Malaysians stranded

there by arranging Boeing 747 flights to bring them home.

"He (Low) facilitated key relationships, including with the late King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, who honoured me with an Order of Merit Award, the highest civilian award and generously gifted hundreds of millions of dollars as a political donation.

"To me... he was someone who could be trusted to advance Malaysia's interests on the international stage."

However, Najib said his trust was exploited by Low and his associates, including former 1MDB legal counsel Jasmine Loo Ai Swan and former chief executive officer Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi.

He also dismissed testimony suggesting that Low acted as a go-between for him and 1MDB's management, emphasising that any resolution he signed had been approved by the board.

Najib criticised the sensationalism surrounding the alleged ties, pointing out that other key figures in the saga also had personal dealings with Low.

He said Shahrol, Loo, and his former Ambank relationship manager Joanna Yu Gin Ping admitted in court that they had visited Low at his residence in Jalan Kia Peng here.

"Shahrol's admission in court that he made 'nasi goreng' (fried rice) for Low and let us not forget Yu made Low soup when he was unwell. For the record, I never prepared any meal for Low.

"Also this is to say nothing of Shahrol's admission of his Abu Dhabi excursion with Low or Loo's confirmation of her holiday trips with Low abroad."

"All of these admissions are in the recorded evidence," he added.

The trial before presiding judge Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah continues.

