

Evidence will clear me, says Najib

Ex-PM tells why it is 'insane' to seek damaging information from US court

By **NURBAITI HAMDAN**
nurbaiti@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak told the High Court that it would be "totally insane" for him to seek evidence from a United States court to bolster his defence in the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) trial if he did not believe it would exonerate him.

"If I were complicit in the defrauding of 1MDB, it would have been totally insane for me to ask for this evidence from the courts, because that would implicate me. I would be insane to have done it," he said yesterday.

Najib was testifying on the sixth day of his defence.

Instead of seeking the evidence, the former prime minister said it would be "logical" for him to suppress the evidence if he did not believe it would bolster his defence.

"I want the evidence to be presented in court because I feel totally vindicated. Insha-Allah if the evidence is tabled, I feel confident I would be exonerated," he said.

Najib was referring to the letters sent by his lawyers to judges in the US Southern and Eastern District Court in New York on March 14, 2021.

He claimed that evidence bene-

ficial to his case was mentioned by former Goldman Sachs banker Tim Leissner during his testimony in Roger Ng's trial, which revealed key details about the duo's roles in the 1MDB scandal.

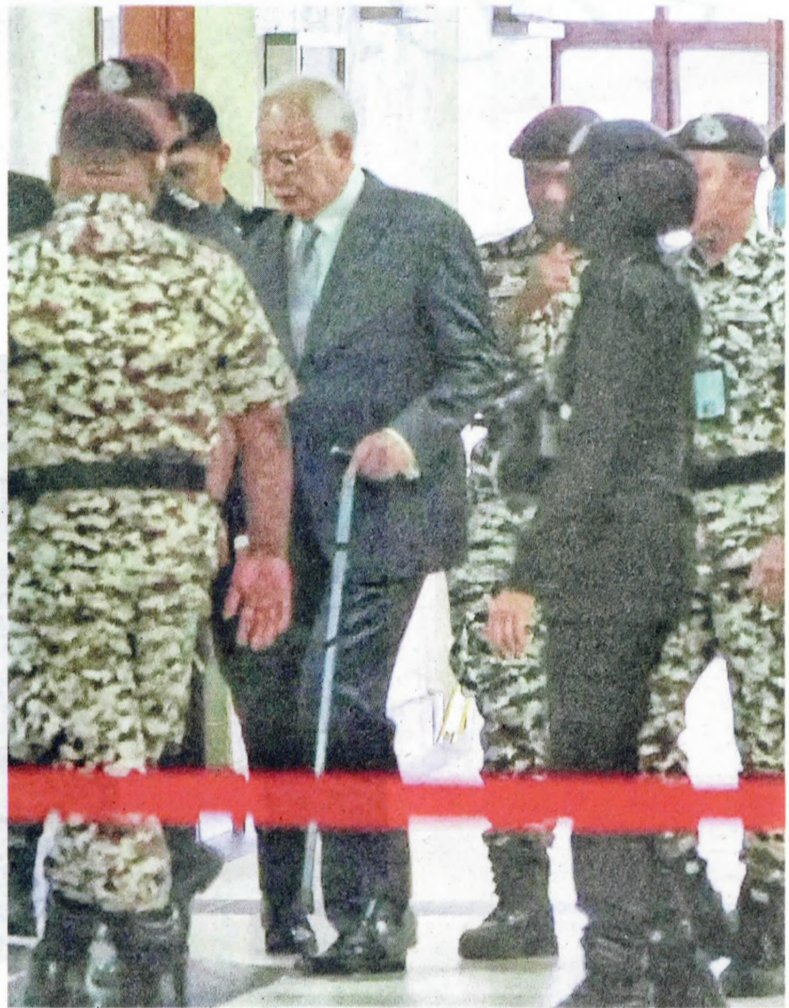
During the proceedings yesterday, the High Court reminded parties in the trial not to issue statements outside of the courtroom that could jeopardise the trial.

Justice Collin Lawrence Sequerah, who is presiding over the case, asked parties to refrain from making statements relating to the trial and to remain civil to each other.

"The only thing I can advise is not to make statements out of this courtroom, make it a liberty to apply. So far parties have been civil to each other, let us keep it that way," the judge said.

Justice Sequerah made the remarks after deputy public prosecutor Ahmad Akram Gharib told the court that the prosecution was objecting to Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah conducting a press conference, saying it was bordering on contempt and impeding the court process.

Muhammad Shafee held a press conference in the afternoon after the morning court session ended, in which he said he would be applying to the court to inter-



Court date: Najib accompanied by prison officers entering the courtroom at the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex. - MUHAMMAD SHAHRIL ROSLI/The Star

view former Goldman Sachs officer Ng, who has been convicted in the United States for his role in the 1MDB scandal.

"Anything said, in evidence, is still subject to our cross-examination."

"Bringing this matter to the public and media amounts to sub judice and hinders the trial," DPP Ahmad Akram said.

"Tan Sri's remark was 'Let us see what the prosecution has to say about this' does not hurt our ego but places extra pressure on us to respond to an application they have yet to submit. This must stop," he added.

Muhammad Shafee however argued that he did not understand the objection from the prosecution as he had already

informed the court of his intention to interview Ng during the morning proceedings.

"I've said this in open court and I notified the press. I want to hear what the prosecution has to say," Muhammad Shafee said.

Justice Sequerah told Muhammad Shafee that while the lawyer was at liberty to make the application, he ought to refrain from making a press statement about it.

On Oct 30, Najib was ordered by the High Court to enter his defence on four counts of using his position to obtain RM2.28bil gratification from 1MDB's funds and 21 counts of money laundering involving the same amount.

The hearing continues today.