

Judge: Najib can seek an acquittal

Ex-PM can also ask for DNAA if hearing is delayed

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

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak can seek an acquittal or a discharge not amounting to an acquittal (DNAA) if the prosecution is not ready to start the hearing of his RM27mil money-laundering case on Sept 17.

Justice K Muniandy said this following a verbal application by the former prime minister's lawyer for the charges to be dropped.

The judge said if the case was not heard in September, the defence could apply for an acquittal or a DNAA.

The judge then vacated the hearing dates previously fixed by Justice Mohamed Zaini Mazlan (who has been elevated to the Court of Appeal) and fixed five new dates for the hearing from

Sept 17 to 19, on Sept 23 and 24.

Earlier, Najib's lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, in seeking the acquittal, said the case had been going on for too long.

"It has been (fixed) for 26 days for case management alone before Justice Mohamed Zaini and for four days of case management before Your Lordship.

"We can see the difficulty of the prosecution in making up their mind. It shows that the charge can be regarded as groundless, and therefore an order of acquittal is, in fact, in order.

"In light of this, I seek a discharge and acquittal for the three charges before Your Lordship," Muhammad Shafee said yesterday.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Mohd Ashrof Adrin Kamarul, however,



RM27mil case: Najib waving to photographers after the court proceedings in Kuala Lumpur. — Reuters

objected to Muhammad Shafee's request.

He said the prosecution was only seeking time to consider the representation sent by Najib to the Attorney General's Chambers.

"I understand that the case has been fixed since 2019. But I am instructed to seek another case management date.

"I cannot agree to what Muhammad Shafee is asking for," Mohd Ashrof said.

Muhammad Shafee replied that it would be a miscarriage of justice if the case was delayed any further.

"I think the least we can do is DNAA. If they have to proceed with the case, they can just

re-charge," he added.

Justice Muniandy then said the court would proceed with new hearing dates and the defence would be at liberty to apply for an acquittal order or for a DNAA should the trial not begin by then.

On Feb 3, 2019, Najib claimed trial to the three charges of money laundering by accepting proceeds from unlawful activities amounting to RM27mil through his three AmPrivate Banking accounts at AmIslamic Bank Bhd, AmBank Group Building, Jalan Raja Chilian on July 8, 2014, under Section 4 (1) (a) of the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Finance and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities 2001.