

ALLEGED SRC INTERNATIONAL INTERMEDIARY

Najib denies directing SRC through CEO

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak denied that Nik Faisal Ariff Kamil was the link between him and SRC International Sdn Bhd, as testified earlier by two third-party respondents in a US\$1.18 billion civil suit.

Najib, 71, said this when he took the stand as the first defendant in the suit filed by SRC International against him and Nik Faisal, the former chief executive officer, who is at large.

Najib was the sole shareholder of SRC International and its advisor emeritus at the material time.

The former Pekan member of parliament also dismissed claims by the duo, former SRC International directors Tan Sri Ismee Ismail and Datuk Suboh Md Yassin, that every decision of its board needed to be approved by him and his instructions would be given through Nik Faisal.

Najib said the duo's claims were untrue as it was not how Minister of Finance (Inc) companies were run and SRC International was no exception.

"In my limited meetings with Nik Faisal, he represented that the board had decided on the investments after the necessary deliberations and due diligence were undertaken through exter-

nal consultants and advisers.

"I certainly was not directing the board in any way with regard to the same. I was not in any position to micro-manage any Minister of Finance (Inc) company, including SRC International.

"Further, SRC International was only one of many Minister of Finance (Inc) companies that were involved in national interest-related projects at that time. There was no reason for me to be directing the board of SRC International through Nik Faisal.

"Looking at things, now it appears that Nik Faisal may have been playing both sides. To me, he would hold out that matters had been decided by the board, and to the board he held out that I had directed on matters."

Najib said he was baffled why the other SRC International directors, including Ismee, did not bother to verify things with him directly and merely accepted the word of Nik Faisal, especially concerning funds of the firm.

"Ismee, as I mentioned, was an experienced corporate man with tremendous experience in the way government-linked companies are run. He had my personal contact number and we had met on several occasions. Never once was I asked on the matters he said

Nik Faisal had represented to the board," he said when reading his witness statement.

In the proceedings that began at 9.33am, Najib was seen walking towards the witness stand using a walking stick to take his oath before High Court judge Datuk Ahmad Fairuz Zainol Abidin.

Najib had been down with severe knee inflammation, prompting the postponement of his corruption trial for allegedly misappropriating 1Malaysia Development Bhd funds.

Upon seeing Najib's condition, Ahmad Fairuz asked him if he was comfortably seated on the witness stand.

To this, Najib said he might have to stretch his legs throughout the proceedings.

The trial continues.

SRC International, under its new management, filed the suit in May 2021, claiming that Najib committed a breach of trust and power abuse, and personally benefited from its funds and misappropriated the said funds.

SRC International is seeking a court declaration that Najib is responsible for the company's losses due to his breach of duties and trust, and for him to pay back the RM42 million in losses that it has suffered.