

Najib wheeled into court for 1MDB hearing

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak showed up in court in a wheelchair yesterday following complaints of acute knee inflammation last week.

Dressed in a brown suit, the 71-year-old former prime minister is said to have been hospitalised last week for acute knee inflammation.

He was, however, seen walking slowly with the aid of a cane inside the courtroom.

High Court judge Justice Collin Lawrence Sequerah also allowed the defence's request for Najib to sit outside the dock on a chair to enable him to "stretch his legs" while the court heard the final arguments in his 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) fund misappropriation case.

During submissions yesterday, Najib's defence contended that his endorsement of the acquisition of an independent power plant (IPP) was made much later after the idea was initially proposed by other members of the 1MDB board of directors.

Najib's counsel, Wan Azwan Aiman Wan Fakhruddin, said that because of this, it was clear that the former premier could not have devised the scheme for his benefit, Bernama reported.

"The idea for the acquiring of Tanjong Energy IPP came three months before Najib greenlighted it through the minutes of representatives (MR) and shareholder's special resolution (SSR).

"Former 1MDB chief executive officer (CEO) Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi even mentioned this during his testimony in court, stating that it was a good opportunity for 1MDB to venture into the energy sector in Malaysia and allow the sector to be managed by a government-owned company, namely 1MDB," said Wan Azwan Aiman.



Court day: Najib is seen attending court on wheelchair.

In his closing remarks on Najib's second charge, Wan Azwan Aiman said the prosecution had failed to establish any evidence proving that Najib used his positions as prime minister, finance minister and chairman of the 1MDB board of advisers to obtain over RM90mil from 1MDB funds for personal gain.

"Although the facts in the case differ in terms of timing and subject matter, the evidence provided by the prosecution consistently proves that Najib is not

responsible for the alleged misconduct.

"There is no testimony from any witness in this case, including former 1MDB CEOs Shahrol Azral and Mohd Hazem Abd Rahman, former 1MDB chief financial officer Azmi Tahir and former 1MDB general counsel Jasmine Loo, indicating that their actions were done to gratify Najib," he said.

Najib faces four charges of abusing his position to obtain RM2.3bil from 1MDB funds bet-

ween Feb 24, 2011, and Dec 19, 2014. He also faces 21 charges of money laundering involving the same amount between March 22, 2013, and Aug 30, 2013, all of which were linked to transactions at AmlIslamic Bank Bhd, Jalan Raja Chilian branch.

The charges are filed under Section 23(1) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 and Section 4(1)(a) of the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act.

The hearing resumes today.