

MISAPPROPRIATED FUNDS

'Money ended up in ex-PM's bank account'

PUTRAJAYA: Portions of misappropriated 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) funds had ended up in Datuk Seri Najib Razak's personal bank account, the High Court heard yesterday.

Retired police officer R. Rajagopal said this was his finding when investigating the global financial scandal involving 1MDB several years ago.

He also agreed with the prosecution's suggestion that top 1MDB executives — then chief executive officer Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi, his successor Mohd Hazem Abdul Rahman and then chief financial officer Azmi Tahir — did not receive any money from the company.

Rajagopal said this during cross-examination by deputy public prosecutor Mohamad Mustafa P. Kunyalam while testifying as a defence witness in Najib's corruption trial.

The former prime minister is accused of misappropriating billions of ringgit in 1MDB funds.

Mustafa: Ultimately, these (monies) ended up in Najib's account?

Rajagopal: Certain portions of these monies ended up in Najib's bank account.

Mustafa: Azmi, Hazeem and Shahrol did they not receive money from these transactions?

Rajagopal: Based on the police investigation, they did not receive any of the investment proceeds made by the company.

Rajagopal disagreed with lead prosecutor Ahmad Akram Gharib's suggestion that he had not made serious efforts to bring back Tang Keng Chee, a key figure in the 1MDB scandal, in 2016.

The trial heard that Tang, also known as Casey Tang, was considered one of fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho's elusive "lieutenants".

He was a former 1MDB executive director of business development, who disappeared after giving a statement in Bangkok in 2016.

Earlier, Rajagopal said Tang had been under investigation for authorising the remittance of US\$700 million from 1MDB to Good Star Ltd, a company controlled by Low.



The funds were part of a joint venture between 1MDB and PetroSaudi Holdings (Cayman) Ltd in 2009 to form 1MDB PetroSaudi Ltd.

Akram: Low is said to be close to Najib. Was that why he (Tang) was given preference not to be brought back?

Rajagopal: I do not agree that he was given preference just because he was close to Najib.

Akram: Is it because you did not want to offend Najib?

Rajagopal: I disagree. As an investigating officer, I had to follow a set of rules.

Tang is believed to have disappeared after being found to have committed an offence under Section 23 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act and Section 28 of the same act in 2018.

Najib faces four charges of using his position to obtain RM2.3 billion in bribes from 1MDB funds and 21 charges of money laundering involving the same amount.

The trial continues.