

NAJIB GETS 15 YEARS' JAIL, FINED RM13.4B

Judge dismisses as 'pure fantasy' Najib's defence that 1MDB officials were misled by Jho Low

PUTRAJAYA

DATUK Seri Najib Razak was found guilty yesterday in the final corruption case linked to the multi-billion ringgit 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal, bringing to a close a legal saga that has stretched more than seven years.

The court, presided over by High Court judge Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah, found the former prime minister guilty on four counts of abuse of power and 21 counts of money laundering.

He was sentenced to 165 years in jail and fined RM11.4 billion after being found guilty of abuse of power in the RM2.3 billion 1MDB case.

He was also jailed five years and fined RM2 billion for the 21 money laundering charges.

However, Najib will effectively serve 15 years behind bars after the court ordered the jail term to run concurrently after he finishes serving his current six-year sentence for misappropriating RM42 million from SRC International Bhd. He will serve an additional 40 years in jail if he fails to pay the fine.

'HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE'

Sequerah said the prosecution had proven its case beyond a reasonable doubt and rejected Najib's longstanding defence that the funds were legitimate political donations.

The judge ruled that the four letters from Saudi Arabia, which purportedly show that the funds were "political donations", were forgeries.

He said the letters were never produced in their original form before the court, adding that no verification was made by Najib to ensure the funds originated from the family of the late King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

Sequerah said tracing of the

funds showed they were channelled through third-party private companies Vista Equity, Blackstone and Tanore, entities owned by fugitive financier Eric Tan.

He found it unusual that no written acknowledgement was sent to the Saudi monarch's family to express gratitude for the alleged donation.

"The donation narrative was also not declared in the cabinet minutes. He acted in wilful blindness, and hence, the funds are considered highly questionable," he said, adding that Najib had the resources to verify the legitimacy of the funds.

The judge ruled that the Arab donation narrative was not meritorious and that the funds were derived from 1MDB.

'PURE FANTASY'

Sequerah dismissed Najib's defence that he was misled by officials and intermediaries, describing it as "pure fantasy" that

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