

# 'Low acted as Najib's proxy, conduit and agent'

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the 1MDB top management had, with fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho, also known as Jho Low, conspired against the former prime minister.

He said Najib, by virtue of his combined roles as prime minister, finance minister and adviser to 1MDB's board of advisers, occupied "the very apex" of the decision-making process in matters relating to the sovereign fund.

He said the only reasonable explanation for 1MDB officers acting on instructions from Low involving colossal sums of money was their genuine belief that the rogue businessman was acting on Najib's instructions or with his authority.

He said there was overwhelming evidence that Low acted as a proxy for Najib.

This, he said, was evident as all of Low's instructions were treated by 1MDB's top management as having come directly from the former prime minister.

He said prosecution witnesses testified that Low's emails, talking points and directives were integral to 1MDB's operational workflow.

"These communications guided major transactions such as the PetroSaudi joint venture, energy acquisitions and fund management and were issued in the ordinary course of business."

## 'NO COUNTRY BUMPKIN'

Sequerah said Najib was fully aware of the company's dealings as he was not a "country bumpkin".

Najib, he said, was aware when he rejected advice from former 1MDB chief executive Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi and others about the company's dealings involving Low.

Sequerah rejected claims that Najib was focused solely on managing the country, stressing that he had instructed Low to accompany his former aide, Datuk Amhari Effendi Nazaruddin, on trips to Abu Dhabi and China.

"The inference here is that Low acted as Najib's proxy, conduit and agent. The argument by the defence that Najib was misled by 1MDB management is unmeritorious."

Sequerah highlighted testimony from former finance minister II Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni



Datuk Seri Najib Razak's supporters gathering outside the Palace of Justice in Putrajaya yesterday, NSTP PIC

BY AHMAD UKASYAH

Hanadzlah, who expressed concerns over 1MDB to Najib but was told not to worry about the company.

In mitigation, Najib's counsel, Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, requested for a more lenient sentence.

He said Najib, despite being incarcerated in Kajang Prison for the SRC International Bhd case, remained focused on national economic development.

Najib, he said, was pursuing a PhD in economics, focusing on national economic transformation.

"Najib never took the money for his own benefit. The funds that he thought were from the Saudi monarch were used for welfare, political, election and CSR (cor-

porate social responsibility) purposes."

He highlighted Najib's health concerns, saying his client faces immediate risks of stroke and heart attack.

## 'KLEPTOCRACY AT ITS WORST'

Earlier, the prosecution urged the court to impose the maximum sentence of 20 years in jail on Najib.

They sought a record fine of RM11.4 billion, calculated as five times the gratification involved in the abuse of power charges, alongside a penalty under the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001.

Deputy public prosecutor Datuk

Ahmad Akram Gharib said the sentences must run consecutively after Najib completed his current jail term.

Akram described Najib's offences as among the "worst imaginable cases" of financial crime in Malaysia, calling it "kleptocracy at its worst" and "an absolute betrayal of trust", given his former roles as prime minister, finance minister and 1MDB board chairman.

The prosecution highlighted the devastating impact on national finances, noting that total 1MDB liabilities stand at nearly RM50 billion, with the government having already paid about RM42 billion and an outstanding debt of approximately RM13 billion.