

**January 26, 1993, Tuesday**

**LENGTH:** 378 words

**HEADLINE:** MALAYSIA: JOHOR PRINCE FREED ON ASSAULT CHARGE

**DATELINE:** KUALA LUMPUR, Jan. 26

**BODY:**

A Malaysian court today dismissed a case against a Johor prince after the alleged assault victim agreed to an out-of-court settlement, one week after Parliament passed a bill stripping royal families of their legal immunity. Malaysian television showed a smiling Tunku Majid Idris, son of the Sultan of Johor, walking out of the courthouse in the state capital of Johor Bahru after the judge dismissed the case and ordered him to pay compensation to the victim. The procedure took only five minutes. Majid was charged with wilfully causing injury to Perak hockey player Mohamed Jaafar Selvaraja Mohamed Vello after a game last July. The alleged assault unleashed a chain of events that led to an extraordinary move by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed's government to curb the powers of the country's hereditary rulers. The Malaysian Parliament last week passed a constitutional amendment bill removing the immunity from prosecution enjoyed by Malaysia's royal families. The country is now in a legal impasse over whether the bill could become law even after the Conference of Rulers refused to give its consent to the amendments. The Malaysian Hockey Federation slapped a five-year ban on Majid after the alleged assault. This was followed by a spate of withdrawals by Johor state from federation-sponsored games around the country. The government decision to remove the rulers' legal immunity came after the Sultan of Johor allegedly assaulted a hockey coach who had protested a boycott by Johor of another game in December. Majid's trial had been fixed for three days starting today and involved importing a judge and prosecutor from outside the state and 29 prosecution witnesses under tight security. After the court opened today, Senior Federal Counsel Suriyadi Ali Mohamad told Judge Abdul Rahman Abdul that Mohamed Jaafar had agreed to settle the case out of court in exchange for a \$390 compensation. The offense provides for a maximum penalty of one year in jail or \$778 fine or both. Suriyadi later told reporters that Mohamed Jaafar had made the decision himself, with no pressure from any party. He said he only learned of the alleged victim's change of mind before the trial today. Mohamed Jaafar declined to comment when questioned by reporters.

**LOAD-DATE:** January 28, 1993