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Court-Lim

MARINA MAHATHIR TESTIFIES AT GUAN ENG'S SEDITION TRIAL

MELAKA, Dec 11 (Bernama) -- Guest newspaper writer Marina Mahathir told the High Court today that she wrote an article titled "Whither Justice?" based on media reports about a 15-year-old girl linked with former Melaka Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik.

Marina, 39, a public relations consultant, said this when testifying as a defence witness at the trial of Kota Melaka member of parliament Lim Guan Eng who is charged with sedition and maliciously printing false news.

Lim had told the court previously that he was inspired by Marina's article, which appeared in The Star daily of Nov 9, 1994, to publish a pamphlet which contained the the words "victim imprisoned".

"I wrote the article because I felt, at the time, that the girl was being put on trial by the media. Although no one knew who was right, who was wrong, her own background was publicised in the media," Marina said when asked by counsel Karpal Singh what prompted her to write the article.

Marina said she viewed the matter as an extreme case of a women's rights issue.

Karpal Singh then tendered the article to the court as an exhibit.

Lim, 36, is accused of publishing a pamphlet titled "Ceramah Kisah Benar" (Talk on a True Story) with malicious intention to print false news under the title "Mangsa Dipenjarakan" (Victim Imprisoned).

Lim, who is also the deputy secretary-general of DAP, is charged under Section 8A (1) of the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984.

He faces a second charge under Section 4 (1) (b) of the Sedition Act 1948 in connection with a speech he made at Hotel Emperor here on Jan 19. He is alleged to have said that Malaysia practiced double standards in enforcing the law.

In the speech, Lim questioned the country's laws after Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah announced that Rahim would not be charged in court.

Replying to a question by Deputy Public Prosecutor Mohd Azahar Mohamed, Marina agreed that the title "Whither Justice?" was given by the newspaper's editor.

Marina also agreed with Mohd Azahar that she wrote the article based on media reports and that she did not have a personal knowledge of the case involving the girl.

To another question, Marina said she did not, in her article, use the words "the girl was imprisoned or detained by police or any other authority" or give the impression that the girl was being held or jailed.

During re-examination by Karpal Singh, Marina said that although the article's title was given by the newspaper's editor, it reflected the contents of the article she wrote.

Karpal Singh also referred to a portion of the article which carried the sub-heading "Making A Mockery of Justice".

Mohd Azahar objected, saying counsel should not be allowed to question about the portion as it was not raised by the prosecution during cross-examination earlier.

Judge Datuk Mohd Noor Abdullah, however, said the question was relevant because the portion of the article was referred to attract the attention of the witness and help her with her testimony.

Karpal Singh later told the court that the defence would be calling two other witnesses -- the girl referred to in the article who is now 17 years old, and Attorney-General Mohtar.

He added, however, that the defence needed more time to call the two of them to testify because the girl is currently sitting for the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination while Mohtar is abroad and would only return after Dec 14.

Mohd Noor then adjourned hearing to Feb 27 and 28 next year after counsel informed him that an earlier defence witness, Pendek Ahmad, who fainted while testifying yesterday was still ill.

Pendek, 65, is the grandmother of the the 17-year-old girl.

Karpal Singh was assisted by J.Amardass, and Azahar by DPP Wong Kian Keong, while L. Sabapathy was holding a watching brief for Marina.--

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