

08 JUN 1998

Muhammad-Corruption

MUHAMMAD TAIB TO BE CHARGED WITH FAILURE TO DECLARE ASSETS

KUALA LUMPUR, June 8 (Bernama) -- Former Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhamad Taib is to be charged in the Sessions Court here on Wednesday under the Prevention of Corruption Act pertaining to his failure to declare all his assets.

Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah said today he was satisfied that there were prima facie evidence against Muhammad after studying the report of investigations by the Anti Corruption Agency (ACA).

As such, he said, he had issued a consent to prosecute under Section 25(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1961 (Laws of Malaysia Act 57).

The summons had been obtained from the court to be served on Muhammad and he would be produced before the Sessions Court at 9am on Wednesday, he said in a statement issued here.

The statement was signed by the Attorney-General's Special Officer, Shamsuddin Hassan, on behalf of the Attorney-General.

Mohtar said that he had issued the consent to prosecute in his capacity as the Public Prosecutor based on the outcome of the first part of the ACA investigations into a report lodged against Muhammad.

He said that the report against Muhammad was lodged at the Sentul police station on June 28, last year for allegedly committing an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act. He did not disclose the name of the complainant.

The first part of the investigations related to the alleged failure by Muhammad to declare all his assets as provided for under Section 25(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1961 (Laws of Malaysia Act 57), he said.

Mohtar said that the second part of the investigations focussed on related offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1998 (Laws of Malaysia Act 575) enforced on June 8, this year.

He said that the investigation papers relating to the first part of the ACA investigations were received by the head of the Prosecution Division in the Attorney-General's Chambers on June 1, this year.

Muhammad was acquitted by the District Court in Brisbane, Australia, on May 29 of two charges of making a false declaration pertaining to the amount of money he was bringing into Australia on Dec 16, 1996 and failure to declare A\$1.26 million (RM2.9 million) when he was leaving for New Zealand six days later.

During the trial, the former Menteri Besar said that he had purchased properties valued at millions of ringgit in Australia and New Zealand under the name of his wife, Puan Sri Asbi Rohani Asnan.

The properties are a piece of land valued at A\$460,00 and a bungalow valued at A\$460,000 in Sovereign Islands, Gold Coast, a farm in Currajong, also in Australia, valued at A\$3.7 million, and two pieces of land and a house in New Zealand valued at NZ\$4 million.

The statement on Muhammad's prosecution came just hours before the start of the Umno Supreme Council's monthly meeting which will discuss, among other things, Muhammad's position in the party.

Muhammad, an Umno vice president, took leave after he was charged in the Australian court.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, on his return from his trip to Japan on Friday, said he would check whether Muhammad had already declared all his assets to him.

-- BERNAMA

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