

19 SEP 2002
Court-Buniyamin
BUNIYAMIN CHARGED WITH DEFAMING MAHATHIR

KOTA BAHARU, 19 Sept (Bernama) -- Kelantan PAS information officer Buniyamin Yaacob, who is alleged to have accused Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad of watching pornographic video with his grandson, was charged in the Sessions Court here today with defaming the prime minister.

The former Bachok MP pleaded not guilty to the charge and was freed on bail of RM7,000 by judge Mohd Yazid Mustafa. Hearing was set for Nov 5.

Buniyamin, 56, who looked unwell, arrived in an ambulance and taken to the courtroom in a wheelchair.

Dressed in the green Kota Baharu Hospital patient attire, he was accompanied by his wife Norhaiti Ibrahim, a doctor and a nurse.

Others included Kelantan PAS secretary Wan Ismail Wan Jusoh, legal adviser Takiyuddin Hassan and information chief Zulkifli Mamat.

A large group of people, including PAS supporters, filled the public gallery.

Buniyamin is defended by lawyer Karpal Singh while Wan Jawahir Harun is holding a watching brief for Kelantan PAS. Appearing for the prosecution are DPPs Nordin Hassan, Azmi Ariffin and Dzulkifli Ahmad.

Buniyamin is alleged to have made his accusation against Dr Mahathir at a ceramah at the Kelantan Islamic Centre here on the night of March 15.

If convicted of the charge under Section 500 of the Penal Code, he faces up to two years in jail or a fine, or both.

Karpal earlier urged the court to throw out the charge on the grounds that it did not meet the requirements of Section 131 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

He pointed out that the complainant in the case was not Dr Mahathir but one Kamarul Bahrin Awang from Bunut Susu, Pasir Mas.

DPP Nordin, however, argued that any member of the public can make the complaint based on which an investigation can be carried out.

The judge accepted the prosecution's argument, and rejected Karpal's objection.

-- BERNAMA
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