

29/12/2002

Buniamin in hospital, defamation trial postponed

KOTA BARU, Sat. - The trial of former Bachok MP Buniamin Yaacob, who is facing a criminal defamation charge over his allegation that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had watched a pornographic video with his grandchildren, was postponed today as he was admitted to the Kota Baru Hospital.

Lawyer Wan Tarik Wan Mohammad, representing Wan Jawahir Harun who is holding a watching brief for Kelantan Pas in the case, told Sessions Court judge Azman Abdullah that Buniamin had been warded for treatment.

He said doctors attending to Buniamin claimed his condition was unstable and he had to undergo haemodialysis twice a week.

Azman said the defendant's lawyers should have told the court of his haemodialysis treatment earlier. Deputy Public Prosecutor Nordin Hassan also told the court that the prosecution did not receive any letter from the lawyers to adjourn the case.

"I was told the letter was faxed to our office yesterday. It is hoped that they will inform us of such matters earlier in future so that there is no need for us to come (from Kuala Lumpur)," he said.

The trial today was scheduled for four days until Dec 31. The new date for the hearing was fixed on April 8-10.

Hearing of the case earlier this month was postponed after Buniamin was taken ill.

Azman deferred hearing to today, following a request by defence counsel Karpal Singh.

The 56-year-old former Bachok MP, a diabetic, is also suffering from kidney problems.

Buniamin, from Kampung Belukar in Gunung, Bachok is alleged to have committed the offence during a ceramah at Pusat Tarbiyah Islamiyah in Pengkalan Chepa here between 10pm and 11.30pm on March 15 this year.

He was charged under section 500 of the Penal Code, which is punishable with up to two years' jail, a fine, or both.