

Court puts off crucial decision on Ling case to March 9

MalaysiaKini.com

January 27, 2012

Hafiz Yatim

The Kuala Lumpur High Court today postponed its decision on whether former transport minister Dr Ling Liong Sik is to enter his defence on charges of deceiving the cabinet in 2002, then headed by Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Justice Ahmadi Asnawi said that he needed more time to determine whether the prosecution has proven a prima facie case against the 68-year-old former MCA president.

"I am sorry for the delay and I will give my decision on March 9," he told the court this morning.

If there is a prima facie case, the judge will order Ling to enter his defence to answer the charges. Otherwise, Ling will be acquitted.

NONELing has been charged with cheating the government by not disclosing to the cabinet an additional interest rate of 7.5 percent a year on the purchase price of the land for the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) project, which had been fixed at RM1.09 billion by the Valuation and Property Services Department (JPPH), based on RM25 per sq ft, inclusive of the coupon interest rate.

This charge is under section 418 of the Penal Code where the former minister is liable to face seven years' jail or fine, or both, on conviction.

Ling also faces two alternative charges - of cheating and intentionally omitting informing the cabinet that the 7.5 percent a year was an additional interest rate on the land price.

For the two alternative offences, Ling could face five years' jail or fine, or both.

Another ex-minister faces similar charges

The offences were allegedly committed at the fourth floor of the Prime Minister's Office, Perdana Putra building in Putrajaya, between Sept 25 and Nov 6, 2002.

azlanA total of 25 prosecution witness testified in the trial which started in August last year, and that includes Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nazri Abdul Aziz and Nor Mohamed Yakcop and former minister Effendi Norwawi.

Ling was first charged on July 29, 2010, at the Putrajaya Sessions Court, but his case later transferred to the Kuala Lumpur High Court.

Another former transport minister and former MCA deputy president Chan Kong Choy also face similar charges of cheating the cabinet with regards to the PKFZ project - this time during Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's tenure as the prime minister.

The prosecution is led by Attorney-General's Chambers head of prosecution Tun Abdul Majid Tun Hamzah, while Ling is represented by a team of lawyers led by Wong Kian Kheong.

DPP Manoj Kurup told reporters that the judge had informed the lawyers in chambers that he needed a few more weeks to write the grounds of judgment.

Ling, when met by reporters, outside court said he would refrain from giving any comments until March 9.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/187580>