

Ex-transport minister's cheating case postponed

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By Koh Jun Lin

The hearing of the former transport minister Chan Kong Choy's charges of cheating has been postponed to April 23, to allow the prosecution to consider a new motion filed by Chan's lawyers.

Approached after the hearing, at the Kuala Lumpur High Court, Chan's counsel Tan Hock Chuan said the motion was to have the case transferred to another judge who is based here, where the case was filed, instead of Penang-based judge Zamani Abdul Rahim.

As an example, he cited PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim's Sodomy II trial filed in Kuala Lumpur, and former Selangor Menteri Besar Mohd Khir Toyo's graft trial filed in Shah Alam, both which were heard by judges based in the respective courts.

He denied that he was "shopping for judges", and said the hearing could be presided by any KL-based criminal high court judge.

Chan is accused of three counts of cheating then Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi into approving Kuala Dimensi Sdn Bhd as the turnkey developer for the Port Klang Free Zone project.

He has been charged under Section 417 of the Penal Code, which carries a jail term of up to five years, a fine, or both, upon conviction.

His predecessor, Ling Liong Sik, is facing similar charges allegedly committed during former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's tenure, and has been called to enter defence.

During the hearing, Tan told the High Court in Kuala Lumpur that a copy of the notice was faxed to the Attorney-General's Chambers on Friday, and served personally to the public prosecutors this morning. Hence, he applied for time to allow them to respond to the new motion.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Nordin Hassan confirmed Tan's statement and agreed that the hearing should be postponed.

"Normally I am not fond of postponements, but sometimes it is warranted based on the reasons given. I find that the reasons given by the accused's counsel and attested by the prosecution, are valid.

"I hereby postpone the hearing to April 23, so that justice may be served," ruled Zamani.

