

Case put off as Gobala has to be in Parliament
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The trial of Padang Serai MP N. Gobalakrishnan, who is accused of obstructing police from executing their duties during nomination day for the Permatang Pasir by-election last year, has been put off to Aug 9 and 10.

On Aug 18 last year, Gobalakrishnan, 49, was charged under Section 353 of the Penal Code with using criminal force to deter a public servant from discharging his official duties.

Today, magistrate Mohamed Azhar Hamzah granted the adjournment after defence counsel Lim Boo Chang produced a letter from Parliament that explained the reason for the MP's absence from court.

NONThe letter, from Parliament administrator Aziyah Abdul Aziz, stated that Gobalakrishnan (right) was duty bound to attend the proceedings from June 7 until July 13.

"The prosecutors did not object to our application for postponement," said Lim.

He said the court would hear the testimony of five witnesses, three from the prosecution and two from the defence, before deciding on the case.

He added that the matter, to be heard in Bukit Mertajam, was quite similar to Batu MP Tian Chua's case of "cop-biting" and could cost Gobalakrishnan his parliamentary seat if he was found guilty.

Article 48(1)(e) of the Federal Constitution states that a person is disqualified from being an MP if he (or she) is convicted of an offence and sentenced to not less than a year in jail or fined not less than RM2,000, and "has not received a free pardon".

Not the first time

Gobalakrishnan was elected MP for Padang Serai in Kedah in the 2008 general election.

This is not the first time that the PKR central committee member has had a run-in with the law.

In December last year, he was fined RM1,000 by a sessions court in Kuala Lumpur after pleading guilty to criminal intimidation of a police officer during an assembly organised by Hindraf in front of the Sri Subramaniam temple in Gombak in 2007.

Eight years ago, Gobalakrishnan was found guilty of obstructing the police and ordered to pay a fine of RM3,000 or be jailed for six months.

On Jan 29, 2002, he was arrested after questioning the actions of the police in preventing about 30 devotees from dancing during the Thaipusam celebration in George Town, Penang.

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