

Ling's arrest caught family by surprise
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The family of former transport minister Dr Ling Liong Sik was just as surprised as the rest of the nation when he was arrested yesterday afternoon and charged with misleading the cabinet over the development of the Port Klang Free Zone.

NONEspeaking to Malaysiakini today, Ling's eldest son Ling Hee Liong said the family had no prior indication of the arrest until police arrived at Ling's house yesterday afternoon.

"The police and the Attorney-General's Chambers were very professional and we thank them for that," he said.

He said Ling (left), who was a former MCA president, rested well last night and that the family was taking the situation calmly.

"We have a strong tradition of knowing what should and should not be done, and what can and cannot be done in the interest of our tanah air tercinta (beloved homeland).

NONE"Nothing has changed and we have nothing to hide," said Hee Liong (right), who posted the RM1 million bail yesterday.

As for the family's immediate reaction upon the arrival of police at Ling's house, Hee Liong said he would rather not talk about it. Neither did he want to discuss what happened before Ling was produced in court.

He also declined to comment on the effect that yesterday's events have had on MCA's reputation and the Malaysian political scene, saying that it could affect the trial.

"It will not be beneficial for me to make such statements. Our only statements are our past, present and future actions. We will go through due process like any other rakyat," he said.

Veteran leaders pay visit

According to journalists who were camping outside Ling's house in Damansara, the former MCA boss was seen leaving with his family at about 12 noon and returned an hour later.

He waved to the waiting journalists but refused to entertain any question. In the afternoon, two party veterans visited the house - former Port Klang Authority chairperson Michael Chen and former Dewan Rakyat deputy speaker Lim Si Cheng.

NONELing is charged under Section 418 of the Penal Code with misleading the cabinet between Sept 25 and Nov 6, 2002, into agreeing to purchase 999.5 acres of land on Pulau Indah for a project, now known as PKFZ, at a price of RM25psf on a deferred payment basis for a 15-year period, at a 7.5 percent interest rate.

The cumulative interest paid would total RM720 million at the end of the repayment period.

He was also offered an alternative charge, under Section 417 of the Penal Code, for the same offence.

According to the charge sheet, the Finance Ministry had already valued the land at RM25psf

- inclusive of compounded interest - and this fact was withheld from the cabinet by the accused.

Ling pleaded not guilty to both charges. The case has been fixed for mention on Sept 3.

He is the most prominent local personality to be arrested in recent years, and is the third former cabinet minister to be charged with corruption.

This is after former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim who was charged in 1999 and former land and cooperative development minister Kasitah Gaddam, in 2004.

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