

'Dato' title of Ling, Phang suspended
Malaysiakini.com
September 1, 2010

In a rare move, the Selangor palace has temporarily stopped Dr Ling Liong Sik and Phang Oi Choo from using the Dato title bestowed on them by the sultan.

sultan sharafuddin sultan of selangor This is because the two are facing criminal charges in relation to the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) scandal.

A statement from the state secretariat this morning said Sultan Sharafuddin Abdul Aziz Shah made the decision in consultation with the state royal council, which met on Aug 19.

"He took into consideration that the charges involve serious offences that affect the interests of the people and the country," the statement said.

"The palace will review their use of the title once they are cleared of criminal wrongdoing."

The duo are not allowed to display the symbols of status as Dato during this period.

Ling, 68, the former transport minister and ex-MCA president, had been awarded the Dato' Paduka Mahkota Selangor title in 1992.

On July 20, he was 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.

Ling faces a maximum of seven years' jail or a fine, or both, if found guilty.

Phang, 63, the former general manager of the Port Klang Authority, was accorded the 'Datin Paduka' title (equal to Dato') in 2001.

She was charged on Dec 10 last year with three counts of criminal breach of trust (CBT) involving a total of RM254.8 million.

She is charged with CBT of RM98.7 million involving an account with RHB Bank Bhd at the Port Klang Authority between Oct 1, 2004 and Sept 5, 2005.

The other two offences, allegedly involving RM21.6 million and RM134.55 million, were said to be committed at the same place between Sept 30, 2005, and May 9, 2006, and between June 1, 2005, and Jan 13, 2006.

If convicted, she faces a maximum of 20 years in jail and a fine for each charge.