

Case transferred, Ling seeks speedy trial
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The Sessions Court in Putrajaya has agreed to transfer a case against former transport minister Dr Ling Liong Sik to the Kuala Lumpur High Court.

DPP Manoj Kurup told the court this morning that the prosecution had received a request from the defence on Aug 30 to transfer the case.

"We have considered the request and the attorney-general has agreed to transfer the case to the High Court. We are making this application under Section 418 of the Criminal Procedure Code," he said.

Under this section, the prosecution has the discretion to transfer cases to the High Court.

Judge Suzana Hussin approved the application and ordered that the case be adjourned to a date to be fixed.

She also agreed that Ling's RM1 million bail should remain until the case is fixed for mention.

Assisting Manoj was DPP Dzulkifli Ahmad, while Ling was represented by Wong Kian Kheong and R Rajasingam.

Lawyer Cindy Khaw held a watching brief for the Port Klang authority.

'Misleading the cabinet'

Ling, 68, was on July 29 charged with misleading the cabinet between Sept 25 and Nov 6, 2002, into agreeing to purchase 999.5 acres of land on Pulau Indah for the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) project at a price of RM25psf on a deferred payment basis over 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.

This charge is under Section 418 of the Penal Code. Ling was also offered an alternative charge, under Section 417, for the same offence.

Ling, who was in court today with his two sons and wife Ena, said he would seek to vindicate himself in court.

"I want a speedy trial," he said.

Ling, is the first former cabinet minister charged with misleading the cabinet.

His counsel has asked for the cabinet minutes to be declassified to assist in his defence.

The case is likely to be a complex one as several VIPs or former VIPs in the cabinet are expected to testify at the trial. Much documentation including cabinet minutes will be involved.

As with the trial of several state excos charged with corruption, the minutes will have to be declassified as official secrets, in order for this to be tendered as evidence. The person who recorded the minutes will also have to testify.

Former PKFZ general manager OC Phang and three others have successfully applied for their hearing to be conducted at the conclusion of Ling's trial.

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