

Ling's Letter To Dr M Did Not Follow VPSD Valuation, Court Told
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KUALA LUMPUR -- The High Court here was on Wednesday told that former Transport Minister Dr Ling Liong Sik submitted a letter containing terms of agreement which were different from the recommendations made by the Valuation and Property Services Department (VPSD) to former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Former VSPD deputy director-general (Valuation) Mani Usilapan, 61, said the attachment on the terms of agreement with Kuala Demensi Sdn Bhd (KDSB), which was sent on June 29 2002 stated that the rate of land purchase in Pulau Indah was RM25 per sq ft, while the VPSD set the value at RM21 per sq ft.

He said that through a letter, with the title "Cadangan Pengambilan Balik Tanah Di Pulau Indah Untuk Pembangunan Pusat Distripark Serantau Di Pelabuhan Klang", the attachment also stated the land size at 999.5 acres (about 404.5 hectares) and the purchase at RM1,088,456,000, but the VSPD only made valuation on land covering only 830 acres (about 335.9 hectares).

Mani said among the other terms which were attached together with the letter were on the repayment period based deferred payment of 15 years; down payment of 10 per cent to be paid as earnest money in two stages (two per cent after approval had been obtained and the remaining eight per cent soon after the agreement signing); interest rate of 7.5 per cent a year and a moratorium of four years.

Mani, during examination-in-chief by Deputy Public Prosecutor Manoj Kurup, said all the terms were not recommended by VSPD.

He said the VSPD only made consideration on the 10-years repayment period, the first year down payment of five per cent and coupon rate at six per cent.

Mani also said that following the valuation on the 999.5 acre land at RM25 per sq ft, there was excess cost of RM720 million.

Meanwhile, when cross-examined by lawyer Wong Kian Kheong, Mani said he informed his superior (former VSPD director-general Valuation) Sahari Mahadi) on the recommendations made by VSPD.

Mani also said that on Oct 9 2000, he wrote a letter to the Transport Ministry Secretary-General on a proposed purchase of a 830 acre site in the same area and suggested that the valuation rate of the land, if repayment was extended to 15 years, based on the same terms for a 10 year repayment period, the rate was RM25.82 per sq ft.

Questioned by Wong whether the VSPD had statistics or percentage on the valuation made by the department being followed by government agencies, Mani said there was no statistics.

Dr Ling, 68, faces an amended principal charge of cheating the Malaysian government by concealing from the Cabinet the additional interest of 7.5 percent a year on the purchase price of a land in Pulau Indah as against the six percent rate set by the VPSD.

He also faces two amended alternative charges of cheating the government by not revealing to the Cabinet the facts related to the additional interest rate, and cheating the Cabinet into believing that the facts related to the purchase of the land were certified and agreed to by the VPSD when he knew there was no such consent.

The offences were allegedly committed at the Prime Minister's office in Putrajaya between Sept 25 and Nov 6, 2002.

The hearing before judge Ahmadi Asnawi continues today.

(Bernama)

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