

No statement from Dr M

The Star - 11/4/2007.

ACA did not see need to do so, court told

PUTRAJAYA: An Anti-Corruption Agency investigating officer testifying at the trial of tycoon Tan Sri Eric Chia said he never recorded any statement from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in connection with Perwaja Steel Sdn Bhd.

Han Chee Rull said he was not aware of several events in which Dr Mahathir was involved, including the former prime minister's visit to the NKK Corporation plant in Japan for an inspection before the technical assistance agreement between that company and Perwaja Steel was signed.

Han, who was being cross-examined by Chia's counsel, Datuk Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, also denied knowing that Dr Mahathir was aware of the high cost of the technical assistance agreement and that there was an ongoing negotiation to improve the deal.

Han said he had recorded Chia's statement for three days beginning Oct 9, 1996, and had obtained information from other witnesses and various documents before the tycoon was charged on Feb 10, 2004.

However, he said he never recorded another statement from Chia.

He agreed that recording a second statement from an accused would be normally conducted after obtaining further evidence but it was not done in this case.

Han said he did not know whether he would have obtained any answers from Chia had he confronted him with the new evidence.

Han, however, denied the contention that investigation against Chia was not fairly done.

Chia, 72, is charged with misappropriating RM76.4mil from Perwaja Rolling Mill and Development Sdn Bhd on Feb 19, 1994.

He faces an alternative charge of dishonestly disposing of the company's funds by entering into an agreement with NKK Corporation and authorising the RM76.4mil to be paid into the account of Frilsham Enterprise Inc with the American Express Bank Ltd, Hong Kong, without the approval of the Board of directors of Perwaja Rolling Mill and Development.

Hearing before judge Akhtar Tahir continues today.