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PRIME NEWS

A-G yet to decide on dropping case

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ADJOURNED UNTIL FEB 18: Dr Mahathir not called for cross-examination

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THE Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik's cheating trial was adjourned to Feb 18 despite former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad being present yesterday to be cross-examined by the prosecution.

Deputy public prosecutor Datuk Tun Majid Tun Hamzah told High Court judge Datuk Ahmad Asnawi that the Attorney-General's Chambers needed time to study Dr Ling's first representation to drop the charge.

"We seek an adjournment to study the representation in a fair manner before making a decision," he said.

Tun Majid said he also needed time to discuss the matter with Attorney-General Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail.

Ahmad then fixed the next trial date on Feb 18.

Dr Mahathir, the second defence witness, was in court yesterday to be cross-examined by the prosecution as the case is now at the defence stage.

The defence had in late October submitted the representation to withdraw the charge against Dr Ling in the light of Dr Mahathir's

testimony during examination-in-chief.

Dr Ling's lawyer, Wong Kian Kheong, informed the court yesterday that his client had instructed him to withdraw a second representation sent on Nov 21 on financial computation in respect of the purchase of the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ).

However, the defence still wanted the A-G's Chambers to consider an earlier representation sent in October following Dr Mahathir's testimony which appeared to clear Dr Ling of the cheating charge.

He had testified that Dr Ling did not cheat or deceive the government over the purchase of the 404.4ha land for the PKFZ project.

He had also told the court that there were no complaints against Dr Ling from his cabinet colleagues or other senior government officials over the purchase of the land.

Dr Ling served in Dr Mahathir's cabinet as transport minister between 1986 and 2003. Dr Mahathir was prime minister between 1981 and 2003.

Dr Ling, 69, is charged with cheating the cabinet by concealing that a 7.5 per cent interest rate per year was an additional interest to purchase the land for the PKFZ project.



LING CHEATING TRIAL



Former prime minister **Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad** (left) and former transport minister **Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik** at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Dr Mahathir is the second defence witness. Bernama pic

The public prosecutor contends that Dr Ling knew that the Valuation and Property Services Department's proposals had determined the land price at RM25 psf and Dr Ling had dishonestly induced the cabinet to give its consent to Port Klang Authority (PKA) to buy the property from Kuala

Dimensi Sdn Bhd (KDSB). As a result, PKA paid KDSB, RM1.808 billion for the property, in excess of RM720 million because of the double interest.

The offence was allegedly committed in the Prime Minister's Department between Sept 22, 2002, and Nov 6, 2002.

Dr Ling told reporters that he was disappointed that the A-G's Chambers had still not decided on the representation.

"Why are they still sitting on it? The charge which has been hanging over my head over the last two years has caused a lot of stress, incurred money and wasted time."