

Court Fixes Jan 27 To Decide Dr Ling's Cheating Case In PKFZ Issue
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 14 (Bernama) -- The High Court here today set Jan 27, next year to decide whether former transport minister Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik needs to enter his defence on a charge of cheating the government in the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) project.

Justice Datuk Ahmadi Asnawi fixed the date after hearing submissions by Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Tun Abdul Majid Tun Hamzah.

Yesterday, the former minister's counsel, Wong Kian Kheong, submitted his submission.

Dr Ling, 68, is charged with cheating the government by not disclosing to the Cabinet an additional interest rate of 7.5 per cent per annum on the purchase price of the land for the PKFZ project, which had been fixed at RM1,088,456,000 by the Valuation and Property Services Department (JPPH), based on RM25 per sq ft, inclusive of the coupon/interest rate.

He also faces two alternative charges, of cheating and intentionally omitting from the Cabinet that the 7.5 per cent per annum was an additional interest rate on the land price.

The offences were allegedly committed at the fourth floor of the Prime Minister's Office, Perdana Putra building in Putrajaya, between Sept 25 and Nov 6, 2002.

Meanwhile, in his submission, Tun Abdul Majid said Dr Ling must be held responsible for the contents of letters to former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, regarding the PKFZ project because he had signed the letters.

He said Dr Ling cannot blame anyone else since he already knew all the terms and conditions in the letters, including the figure 'RM25 per sq ft (psf)' based on special value.

Tun Abdul Majid also submitted that the accused pushed for the purchase of the land, and signed the letter to Dr Mahathir dated April 3, 2002 and wrote again on June 29, the same year.

"As a minister, he was responsible to brief the Cabinet truthfully. He signed the note dated Oct 29, 2002 and in the ordinary course of events, being the minister in charge of transport, in turn having Lembaga Pelabuhan Klang (LPK) under its wing, there can be no one else but the accused who briefed the Cabinet," he said.

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