

High Court postpones Liong Sik's PKFZ decision to March
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 27 — The High Court today delayed its much-awaited decision on Tun Dr Ling Liong's Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) cheating trial to March, saying it needed more time to study the case.

"As I discussed with the learned counsel earlier, I need more time to consider," judge Datuk Ahmad Asnawi said this morning.

He set March 9 for decision before adding, "I'm sorry for all this thing."

When approached outside the courtroom later, a calm-looking Dr Ling, dressed in a neatly-pressed suit, merely told reporters that he felt "normal".

He declined further comment, saying it would be merely be speculation at this juncture.

"Normal feeling... so let's wait for the ninth (of March)... Okay?" the smiling Dr Ling said, before giving a small wave and leaving, followed closely by his wife Toh Puan Ena Ling and sons Datuk Ling Hee Leong and Hee Keat.

Dr Ling was charged in July 2010 with knowingly deceiving the Cabinet into approving land purchase for the PKFZ, which resulted in wrongful losses for the government.

The former MCA president also faces two alternative charges of deceiving the Cabinet into believing that the purchase at RM25 psf and the 7.5 per cent interest rate were acknowledged and agreed to by the Valuation and Property Services Department (JPPH) despite knowing that there was no such agreement.

The PKFZ project was mooted during Dr Ling's tenure as transport minister and the cost of the project, initially estimated at less than RM2 billion, more than doubled to RM4.6 billion by 2007.

The cost of the project has been further projected to swell to as much as RM12.5 billion due to interest incurred from deferred payments if the trans-shipment hub fails to perform.

Though he quit as MCA president in 2003, Dr Ling is still widely perceived to be influential in the party.

Last month, the prosecution had tried to make its case against Dr Ling by saying the latter's purported eagerness in pushing for the purchase of land for the PKFZ arouses suspicion of collusion.

During submission, lead prosecutor Datuk Tun Abdul Majid Hamzah described the eagerness as "suspicious" and noted that Dr Ling had continued to encourage an outright purchase of the 1,000-acre land parcel instead of using the usual land acquisition method, despite being

notified by the JPPH's valuation of existing encumbrances.

"Based on these objective facts, the court can draw a reasonable inference that the accused from the very beginning clearly intended to help out KDSB (Kuala Dimensi Sdn Bhd) by clearing the latter's debt and enriched it for reasons best known to him," he had said.

He also pointed out that Dr Ling had issued a letter for the land purchase to proceed despite the Port Klang Authority (PKA) not being ready to pay at the time.

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