

**Ling: No one complained**  
**TheStarOnline**  
**July 19, 2012**  
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KUALA LUMPUR: No Cabinet minister under Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's administration has complained in a meeting in 2002 that the price of land for the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) project was too high, the High Court heard.

"Nobody mentioned that the cost was too high during the meeting. As far as I am concerned, there are other agencies to look into the price.

"They are the Finance Ministry, the Valuation and Property Services Department (JPPH) and the Economic Planning Unit," said Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik, adding that they would decide if the price was too high.

Asked by lead prosecutor Datuk Tun Abd Majid Tun Hamzah, he denied that the ministry wanted to get the land by "hook or crook", adding: "If the price is too high, it is not viable. What for?"

The Transport Ministry, Dr Ling told Justice Ahmad Asnawi, was not too concerned about the price because as early as March 24, 1999, the Cabinet had agreed to buy the land and had asked the Port Klang Authority (PKA) and the Finance Ministry to work out the price and method of financing.

He also said he could not confirm the truth of minutes of the Cabinet meeting dated Oct 2, 2002, on its decision to buy the land as this was only an extract.

He testified that he could not remember if these minutes and other documents were shown to him by the investigating officer during the recording of his statement for the case.

Dr Ling, 69, is accused of deceiving the Government by not revealing to the Cabinet an additional interest rate of 7.5% annually in the RM1.088bil (at RM25psf) purchase of the land for the project at the Prime Minister's Office in Putrajaya between Sept 25, 2002 and Nov 6, 2002.

He also claimed trial to two alternative charges of cheating, which carry a lighter penalty.

The Cabinet, added Dr Ling, had instructed for the land to be valued, reiterating that he had always directed his officers to follow the JPPH valuation.

However, he said he did not understand the JPPH valuation as it involved a discounted cash flow target rate of 8.25%, coupon rate of 6% and price for bond issuance.

Dr Ling agreed that former Kuala Dimensi Sdn Bhd (KDSB) CEO Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing had written a letter to him over a proposal for a "Turnkey Contract" to build infrastructure for the Transshipment Mega Hub project on an 830-acre land in Pulau Indah.

Tiong, he said, had written in the letter dated Oct 30, 2000, that a similar intention had been brought to the attention of then Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin.

He said he had written that he had no objection to KDSB applying to Daim to be given the contract to develop the land as it was the contracts division under that ministry which decided who got the contract, adding that the Transport Ministry had no power in this matter.

Minutes of a meeting chaired by Dr Ling showed that it was a Finance Ministry representative Abdul Rahim Mokti – not the Transport Ministry – who had proposed for KDSB to given the contract.

The hearing continues on Sept 24.

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