

## ● STEPMOM CHARGED WITH DEATH OF BOY

# Counsel: Her husband's lying

SEREMBAN: The defence lawyer in the case of a woman charged with injuring her stepson leading to his death four years ago, told the Sessions Court here that her husband should have been investigated on the matter.

Jerald Gomez told Judge Sabariah Atan yesterday that the deceased's father, M. Mohan, was the most likely person to have injured the boy and he should have been investigated before being eliminated as a suspect.

In his submission, Gomez said his client, Geetha Chandrasekaran, had no access to her stepchildren and therefore, could not have been able to inflict harm on the boy.

Geetha, 36, had been charged with injuring the boy, M. Veilinthiran, leading to his death at No. 390, Lorong Bayan 8/1 in Taman Desa Rasah here between 8pm and 10pm on Oct 22, 2001.

He said that the prosecution's fourth witness, Mohan, was the only person who had access to the children.

He said Mohan was the only per-

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son who would send Geetha to work and fetch her daily, and once she was home there would be others present.

This meant Geetha had no opportunity to be alone with the victim, much less abuse him.

Gomez also said that the prosecution had not been able to establish when, where and who caused the death of the boy.

He said Geetha's testimony from the incident four years ago had been consistent but the testimony of her husband and his two daughters have been 'full of lies'.

He also said Mohan's statements to Geetha not to speak to the police after the death of the boy, and to Geetha's friend, Wahyunah Nadin, telling her not to bring Geetha back home, showed that he had been hiding something.

Gomez told the court that although the cause of death has been ascertained as blunt trauma to the head, the actual cause of this blunt

trauma remained unclear and could have been a result of many things.

The family, the father and two daughters, had earlier maintained that the deceased had fallen from his bicycle into a drain.

Gomez said a police report had also been lodged stating that the boy had fallen into a drain.

However, after the death of the boy, the family, in their testimonies, claimed that Geetha had swung the boy against the wall repeatedly.

Gomez said these testimonies were contradictory.

"The children have no other persons in their life other than their father and that is why they are lying," he said.

Gomez also said Mohan had only changed his testimony after being confronted with the fact that the deceased had been abused, and conveniently put the blame on his wife, Geetha.

Assistant Superintendent R. Munusamy appeared for the prosecution.

Sabariah fixed March 30 for the prosecution's submission.

# Woman jailed for death of stepson



By P. SHARMINI

SEREMBAN: Cries of relief filled the Sessions Court yesterday when a woman, accused of injuring her seven-year-old stepson leading to his death four years ago, was sentenced to six years' jail.

The courtroom was packed with family members and friends of the victim. They came to the court premises as early as 2pm.

As soon as judge Sabariah Atan delivered the decision, most of the women were seen crying and wiping away tears.

Geetha Chandrasekaran, 36, was charged with injuring M. Veilinthiran, leading to his death at 390, Lorong Bayan 8/1, Taman Desa Rasah, between 8pm and 10pm on Oct 22, 2001.

The offence, under Section 304(b) of the Penal Code for causing death without intent, is punishable with 10 years' jail.

Sabariah sentenced Geetha to six years' jail beginning yesterday, and did not allow a stay of execution, pending an appeal.

She told the defence to file an application for a stay at the High Court.

"I am not allowing a stay on judgment as there are no special circumstances for me to do so," she said.

Geetha was calm when judgment was passed.

Her lawyer, Jerald Gomez, appealed for a lighter sentence as she was a single parent and mother of an eight-year-old girl, as well as the sole breadwinner of the family.

Prosecuting officer Assistant Superintendent R. Munusamy asked the court to impose a deterrent sentence as the case involved public interest and would serve as a lesson to others.

During the trial, Geetha had told the court that the boy had tried to intervene in an argument between her and the boy's father, M. Mohan, on Oct 22, 2001.

She claimed that he was flung against a table and fell unconscious.

The boy was admitted to the Kuala Lumpur Hospital (KLH) on Oct 24, but died of blunt trauma to the head a day later.

A child abuse specialist had told the court that there was bleeding on the boy's scalp and eyes, and multiple swellings on his body, especially the abdomen, buttocks, the supra-pubic area (above the bladder), thighs, arms and back.

There were also retinal haemorrhage (bleeding in the eye), extensive bleeding in the brain, lacerations to the spleen, blood in the abdominal cavity and fractures to the ninth and 10th ribs on the right side.

The extent of his injuries had prompted a Scan team at KLH, made up of child specialists, police officers and officers from the Welfare Department, to seek a post-mortem.

The father and his two daughters had earlier maintained that the boy had fallen from his bicycle into a drain two weeks before being admitted to hospital.

However, during the trial, the victim's two sisters testified that Geetha had turned abusive three months after marrying their father.

Mohan said he was glad the trial was over, adding that justice has been served.