

Five charged with kidnapping

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BUKIT MERTAJAM: Five men were charged in a magistrate's court here with kidnapping a 14-year-old student.

They were Arun Ramalingam, 22, Selvethomas John @ Thomas, 20, David Michael @ David, 20, Larry Cordeiro Lee @ Ah Wei, 20, and Soo Pin Yuh @ Ah Hee, 20, all from Bukit Mertajam.

They were jointly charged with kidnapping Lau Teik Chuan, a Form Two Jit Sin Independent School student, in Jalan Gemilang Jaya 4, Taman Gemilang, Bukit Tengah, at about 6.20am on March 25.

Lau was said to have been abducted while walking with his younger sister and a maid outside the school.

The boy was released two days later in Taman Sri Rambai after the ransom, which was recovered by police, was paid.

The non-bailable offence, under Section 3 of

the Kidnapping Act 1961 (Act 365) read with Section 4 of the Penal Code, carries the death penalty or life imprisonment with whipping.

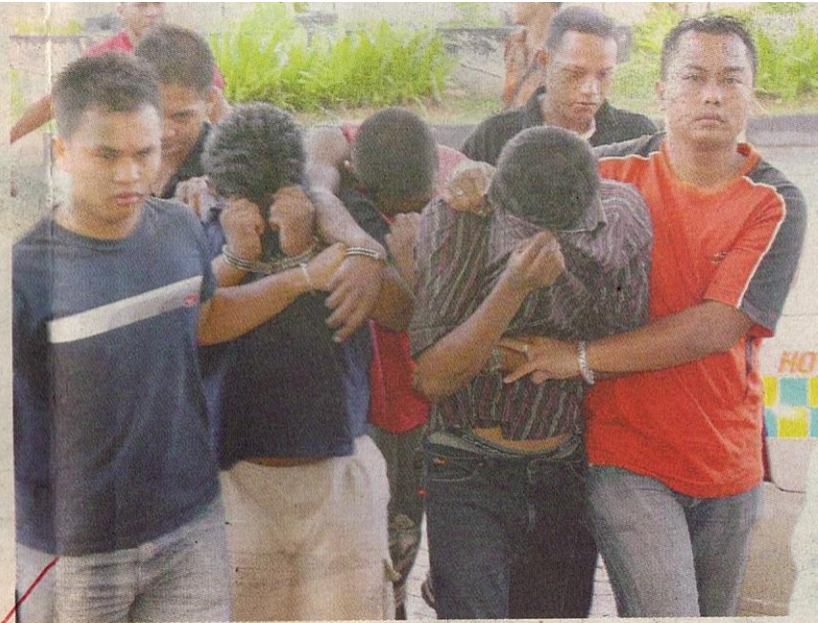
Counsel R.S.N. Rayer appeared for Lee and Soo, while Rafael Prabakaran Abdullah represented Arun. Selvethomas John and David Michael were not represented.

Rayer appealed against DPP Janariah Abdul Muthalib's application for the case to be mentioned in two months' time to obtain a sanction to transfer it to the High Court.

DPP Janariah said she needed time to obtain chemist and DNA reports to assist in the case.

Magistrate Arif Mohamad Shariff ordered the case to be mentioned in the same court in a month's time on May 8.

He also ordered all suspects to be sent for a thorough medical check-up following claims by their counsels that they had sustained bodily injuries while in police custody.



Facing trial: Plainclothes policemen escorting three of the five accused to the Bukit Mertajam magistrate's court in Penang yesterday.