

Suharto's civil trial begins in Jakarta

by UPI

JAKARTA -- A civil trial to recover \$1.5 billion from former Indonesian President Suharto began in Jakarta on Thursday and adjourned for a month. Suharto, 86, was not present when 20 minutes into the hearing, the judge ordered both sides to seek a deal and report back in a month, a BBC correspondent reported. If a deal hasn't been reached by then, the trial will resume, the judge said. As with many Indonesians, Suharto uses only one name. He ruled the country from 1966 until he was ousted in 1998. Last year, failing health helped the former dictator escape criminal prosecution for funneling funds from the Indonesian Central Bank to a charitable foundation he ran. Suharto had several strokes and underwent stomach surgery last year. Prosecutors are seeking \$440 million they claim was stolen from the central bank along with \$1.1 billion in damages, the report said.

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