

Radiation leak: Doc sues hospital

By Susitha R. Fernando

A doctor working at the Maharagama Cancer Hospital is suing the Health Ministry for Rs. 125 million on charges that negligence on its part had made him a victim of radiation.

Dr. P Wasantha Kumara Gamage in a petition filed in the District Court of Colombo said in his plaint that in April, 2001, while he was in his office room at the Maharagama Hospital, the radiation equipment had broken down and he was exposed to ionizing radiation.

Dr. Gamage said that as a result he suffered from fainting fits, tiredness, inability to concentrate and being unable to live a normal life.

He said the equipment had not been maintained properly and repaired on

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time. Health authorities had not complied with the international guidelines set out in the use of radioactive equipment. The Health Department had also not ensured that there were no radioactive leaks in the equipment, he said.

Dr. Gamage claimed that the authorities had not ensured the safety of the machine and that he had also not been provided with safety uniforms.

The plaint was supported by Romesh De Silva PC with Hiran de Alwis and instructed by Srimal Weerakkody. Among the respondents are the Director General of Health Services, the Health Secretary, the Minister of Health and the Director of the National Cancer Hospital.