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July 17 hearing of Rahim's RM15m suit

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The High Court will hear on July 17 a RM15 million defamation suit by former Malacca Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik against Parti Keadilan Nasional information chief Ruslan Kasim.

Abdul Rahim is claiming that Ruslan uttered defamatory words during a debate on the Presidential Speech at the 52nd Umno General Assembly on June 20, 1998.

The case was mentioned before judge Datuk R.K. Nathan today, who fixed the trial date.

Abdul Rahim is claiming that the alleged words were recorded in the minutes of UMNO and on video, of which portions of it were widely reported in the newspapers and other print and electronic media.

In his statement of claim, Abdul Rahim is claiming that the words meant that he was responsible for the publication and dissemination of the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar tidak boleh jadi PM" (50 Reasons why Anwar cannot be PM) by author Khalid Jafri.

Abdul Rahim said the words, among others, were understood to mean that he was "guilty of pitting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the (then) Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim against each other" and was a disloyal Umno member.

Abdul Rahim said the allegations and innuendoes were untrue, baseless and maliciously published, adding that his personal and political reputation suffered serious damage causing him intense personal anguish.

He said Ruslan did not give him an opportunity to refute the allegations prior to uttering the words.

Abdul Rahim is claiming damages, an injunction stopping Ruslan from repeating similar words, cost and other relief.

Ruslan, in his statement of defence, is claiming that the words were fair comment in stating that Abdul Rahim was careless in allowing the publishing, printing or distribution of the book.

Counsel Firoz Hussain represented Abdul Rahim while Vadivu Perumal appeared for Ruslan.

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