

23/03/2001

RM60m suit: TV3 to know fate on June 11

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The High Court today fixed June 11 to deliver its decision in a RM60 million defamation suit by former Pas secretary-general Halim Arshat against TV3 and two others over a news bulletin.

Judge Datuk Dr R.K. Nathan fixed the date after the defence closed its case today and instructed parties to submit written submissions.

Counsel Mohamad Hanipa Maidin, for Halim, and counsel P.H. Looi, who is representing the defendants, are to submit their written submissions by April 16 and May 7 respectively.

Earlier, TV3's information technology executive Abdul Malek Faisal Hyffny, 35, testified for the defence.

Halim Arshat is suing TV3, its then operations director Yunus Said and Buletin Utama producer Rozaireen Ibrahim over the news bulletin on Aug 18, 1997.

He claimed the news broadcast of an article published in the Harakah tabloid allegedly accusing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad of coming out of Islam (murtad) was false and malicious.

Halim, 58, claimed the words in the news bulletin referred or were understood to refer to him because he was at the material time the Pas secretary-general and also the permit holder for Harakah.

He claimed that the words meant, among others, that Harakah and Pas had published the false news that was defamatory of the Prime Minister and that Harakah and Pas were vengeful and jealous of the Prime Minister and the country.

As a result, Halim said he suffered acute embarrassment, his credibility, character and reputation were tarnished and he was humiliated. The defendants deny they had falsely and maliciously published the news.

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