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Senator files RM50m defamation suit

Sujatani Poosparajah

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Wanita Umno Executive Committee Member Senator Datuk Nor Azah Awin is suing a businesswoman for RM50 million over an alleged defamatory letter about her sent to the Prime Minister and several other Ministers.

In her statement of claim dated April 2, Nor Azah said that businesswoman Nor Azizah Borhan, falsely, maliciously and recklessly wrote, signed and published the letter dated Dec 14, 1999.

Nor Azah claimed the words meant that she (Nor Azah) had committed an offence under the Companies Act 1965, was dishonest, was an irresponsible businesswoman and a corporate figure, and was not at all concerned about the welfare and interest of Bumiputera women entrepreneurs.

She said the letter also insinuated that she was not a supporter of the Government, adding that by way of innuendo, the words were understood to mean that she was a hypocrite, an opportunist and was manipulative.

Nor Azah claimed the malicious letter was addressed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and copied to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Muhammad Nazri Abdul Aziz, National Unity Minister Datuk Dr Zaharah Sulaiman, Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Malaysia president Mohayani Shamsuddin and the Exco of the Association of Bumiputra Women Entrepreneurs Malaysia (Usahanita).

Nor Azah said that as a result, her character, credit and reputation was seriously injured and her business was brought into public scandal, adding that her reputation had been generally lowered in the eyes of right-thinking members of society.

She claimed that the motive of Nor Azizah, former president of Usahanita, for writing the letter was to vent her personal spite and ill-will towards her as a response to Nor Azah's appointment as a Senator.

Nor Azah also said Nor Azizah gave her no opportunity to reply to the allegations in the letter.

She is seeking damages, interest, an injunction, costs and further relief.

No defence has been filed as yet.

Nor Azah has also filed an application for an injunction to stop further publication, printing or distribution of the letter.

The application is supported by an affidavit by Nor Azah filed on April 2.

The matter which came before High Court judge Datuk Dr R.K.Nathan today was filed for case management on May 16 after counsel R.Thayakugan and Ramesh N.P.Chandran, for Nor Azizah, requested for time to file affidavits in reply.

Counsel D.P.Naban and S.Gobi represented Nor Azah.