

Matthias Chang spurns fine, opts to go to month's jail
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Matthias Chang, the ex-political secretary of the former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, today refused to pay the RM20,000 fine imposed on him by the Kuala Lumpur High Court for contempt of court, and will have to serve a month in jail in default.

Last Thursday, Justice Noor Azian Shaari gave him a week to pay the fine.

Chang was cited for contempt when he failed to apologise to the court after an argument with the judge and a lawyer during cross-examination in his defamation suit against American Express (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd.

matthias chang ibrahim ali police report 260608 02Chang (right), 60, and his supporters waited at the civil court here from 3pm for the committal order to be served on him.

However, Deputy Registrar K Pavanni only informed him at about 4.15pm that the one-week period ordered by justice Noor Azian Shaari expired late this evening, and according to the court procedure, the committal order could only be issued tomorrow morning.

Last Friday, Noor Azian had dismissed his suit, and ruled that Chang had failed to prove his case after hearing witnesses from both sides as well as submissions.

The lawyer had sued American Express for breach of contract and defamation because his card was suspended.

American Express, in its defence, said that there was no evidence of breach of contract or defamation as claimed.

Earlier, at a news conference, Chang said he is prepared to be prisoned even though members of the Federation of Kwang Siew Association of Malaysia had raised RM20,000 to pay the fine.

"It's a matter of principle. I'm willing to be jailed to prove a point that judges should not get away with their unethical behaviour and lack of decorum," he said.

Chang claimed that Noor Azian had refused to retract some derogatory remarks against his counsel in the civil suit when they attempted to draw her attention to the relevant laws.

- Bernama