

Kalimullah files RM50m defamation suit

KUALA LUMPUR: New Straits Times Press deputy chairman Datuk Kalimullah Hassan has filed a RM50 million suit against lawyer Matthias Chang for defamation.

He also obtained an injunction from the High Court restraining Chang from uttering defamatory words against him.

The writ was filed following a Press conference on June 13 during which the former political secretary to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad made a series of personal attacks

against Kalimullah.

Some of these remarks were published in a report in the Singapore *Straits Times*.

A letter of demand was sent to Chang on June 20, asking him to make an unreserved and unqualified apology.

However, he did not comply with the demand, resulting in Kalimullah seeking legal redress.

Kalimullah's lawyer, Prakash Menon, said: "We filed the writ on June 29, that Matthias Chang, his servants or agents be restrained and

an interim injunction be issued to restrain Matthias Chang, whether by himself or through his servants or agents, from uttering or publishing, or causing to be uttered or published the statements that were made at his Press conference on June 13.

He said the injunction was granted by judge Datuk Kang Hwee Gee in chambers yesterday.

The court has fixed July 25 to hear the inter-parte injunction application.

Meanwhile, the Singapore

Straits Times yesterday apologised unreservedly to Kalimullah for publishing the article that contained various allegations made by Chang.

The article, entitled "Mahathir loyalist blasts Abdullah's supporters"; was published on June 14.

"The assertions were made by Mr Matthias Chang at a Press conference called by him (Chang) on 13 June 2006 and were accurately reported by us in the article.

"We wish to clarify that we do not in any way endorse or

confirm the assertions made against Dato Kalimullah.

"We further acknowledge that we have no basis to make the assertions," Singapore Press Holdings Limited, the publisher of the newspaper, said in the apology.

"We unreservedly apologise to Dato Kalimullah for any distress, embarrassment and injury he has suffered on account of the article.

"We undertake not to make further assertions against Dato Kalimullah: to the same or similar effect," it added.

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Singapore Press Holdings Limited