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'DR M HAD WANTED TO OUST NAJIB SINCE 2014'

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Dad and Muhyiddin have same objective, says Mukhriz

KHAIRAH N. KARIM
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad planned to topple Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak since 2014, his son Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir told the High Court yesterday.

During cross-examination by lawyer Datuk Seri Jahaberdeen Mohamed Yunoos, Mukhriz agreed that his father had attempted to bring down Najib since 2015 and that it was known by the public.

"I agree and in fact it was much earlier than that, in 2014," he said.

Mukhriz was testifying in his case against Prime Minister's press secretary Datuk Seri Tengku Sharifuddin Tengku Ahmad over two alleged defamatory statements against him.

Jahaberdeen: Tun Mahathir's efforts to overthrow Najib are known by the public and widely reported and spread through both social and mainstream media. Do you agree?

Mukhriz: Yes.

When asked on whether there was a conspiracy between Mahathir and former deputy prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin

Yassin, Mukhriz said he would rather not use the word "conspiracy" but said both of them had the same objective to unseat Najib.

Mukhriz, who is Ayer Hitam assemblyman, said he had no ambitions to become the prime minister and his statement was published in the Hong Kong-based English-language newspaper, *South China Morning Post*, on April 22 last year.

"The statement was made in reply to a question in an interview that linked criticism made by my father about Najib was merely to make me prime minister," he said, adding that he was an Umno member when he made the statement.

In his witness statement, Mukhriz said the press statements by Tengku Sharifuddin had affected him negatively and were prejudicial against him and the statements had tarnished his reputation.

Jahaberdeen was representing Tengku Sharifuddin while Mukhriz was represented by lawyer Mohamed Haniff Khatri Abdulla. Trial continues this morning before judge Datuk Ahmad Zaidi Ibrahim.

Mukhriz, 52, filed the suit on May 3 last year alleging that Tengku Sharifuddin had issued four defamatory statements against him on April 15, 20, 23

and 26, the same year.

The statements were under the headings, *Prime Minister's Press Secretary Statement on Donation Confirmation by Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister, Prime Minister's Press Secretary Statement on Former DPM's Reuters Interview, Mukhriz Mahathir Statement: Response by Prime Minister's Press Secretary, and Prime Minister's Press Secretary Statement on Tun Mahathir Mohamad and Mukhriz Mahathir.*



Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir

Mukhriz alleged that the statements implied that Dr Mahathir and Muhyiddin had conspired in a malicious campaign to topple a democratically-elected government and that he was involved directly in the plot between Dr

Mahathir and Muhyiddin.

Tengku Sharifuddin, in his statement of defence, denied that the four statements had disparaged Mukhriz and stressed that the statements were to explain and counter false accusations against Najib.

He said he bore no malice in issuing the media statements which were published for information and in the interest of the Malaysian people.

He said he had a duty and responsibility to defend the prime minister and counter false accusations for the people to have an accurate picture and facts.