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DR M ADMITS PLOT TO DEPOSE PM SINCE 2014

He says he doesn't believe his actions will damage Umno

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

TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamed had wanted to depose Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak since 2014, the High Court heard yesterday.

Testifying as the second witness, Dr Mahathir admitted that he was not concerned that his actions would affect Umno.

He was taking the stand in his son Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir's case against the prime minister's press secretary, Datuk Seri Tengku Sharifuddin Tengku Ahmad, over two allegedly defamatory statements.

Answering a question by Tengku Sharifuddin's lawyer, Datuk Seri Jahaberdeen Mohamed Yunoos, the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman said his actions were not damaging to Umno, but Najib.

Jahaberdeen: Is it true that since 2014 until now, you have been trying to bring Najib down as prime minister?

Dr Mahathir: Yes, indeed.

Jahaberdeen: You have been the president of Umno for more than 20 years, aren't you worried that your actions could be damaging to the party?

Dr Mahathir: No, it is not damaging to Umno, but to Najib.

Mahathir, 92, however, agreed with the lawyer that PPBM was against Umno.

He said normally, the vice-president of Umno would become the president, however, it was on the president's discretion.

Earlier, Mukhriz, who was former Kedah menteri besar, told the court that Umno members knew that even if someone secured the post of vice-president, it did not guarantee that person the prime minister's post.

To Jahaberdeen's question, he said his father never encouraged him to become a politician.

"I did tell him that I wanted to contest for the post of Umno vice-president, and I told him my intentions, but he did not encourage me to do so," Mukhriz said.

When re-examined by his lawyer, Mohamed Haniff Khatri Abdulla, Mukhriz, who is also Ayer Hitam assemblyman, said he entered politics because he wanted to serve the people.

The trial continues on Oct 19 and 20 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.

Mukhriz alleged that the statements implied that Dr Mahathir and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had conspired 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 statements had disparaged Mukhriz, and stressed that they aimed to explain and counter false accusations against Najib.

He said he bore no malice in issuing the statements.

He said he had a duty and responsibility to defend the prime minister.

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