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## Dr M planned to topple Najib, Mukhriz tells court

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir told the High Court that his father Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had planned to topple Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak since 2014.

Asked during the hearing of his defamation suit yesterday if he agreed that Dr Mahathir had attempted to remove Najib from 2015, Mukhriz said he agreed but added that the plan probably began in 2014.

The former Kedah menteri besar was giving evidence in his suit against Najib's press secretary Datuk Seri Tengku Sarifuddin Tengku Ahmad over two allegedly libellous media statements in April last year.

Questioned further by Tengku Sarifuddin's lawyer Datuk Seri Jahaberdeen Mohamed Yunoos if the plan was made known to the public and published in the mainstream and social media, he said yes.

Mukhriz, 52, also agreed to a suggestion that Dr Mahathir and former deputy prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had conspired to topple Najib but added that "I would not use the word 'conspire' but they had the same objective".

Mukhriz, who is Ayer Hitam state assemblyman, also said he told a journalist from the Hong Kong newspaper *South China Morning Post* in April last year that he had no dream of becoming prime minister.

"The statement was in reply to a question by the journalist who asked if Dr Mahathir's criticism of Najib was merely to make me the prime minister. At that time I was still an Umno member," he said.

Earlier, during examination-in-chief by his lawyer Mohammed Haniff Khatri Abdulla, Mukhriz said Tengku Sarifuddin tried to tarnish his reputation by labelling him as someone who was dishonest, immature and not qualified to

become a leader.

In his lawsuit, Mukhriz said he had given notice through a media statement on April 21 asking Tengku Sarifuddin to retract his statements or risk legal action.

The plaintiff claimed that the statements implied that he was directly involved with Muhyiddin and Dr Mahathir in a bid to topple the Government.

He is seeking damages for loss of reputation.