

Dr M challenges appointment of Speaker and deputy

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and four others have filed a legal action to challenge the appointment of Dewan Rakyat Speaker Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun and Deputy Speaker Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said.

Dr Mahathir, together with his son, former Kedah menteri besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, Simpang Renggam MP Dr Maszlee Malik, Kubang Pasu MP Datuk Amiruddin Hamzah and Sri Gading MP Datuk Dr Shahrudin Md Salleh filed the originating summons at the High Court registry here on Thursday.

The lawsuit was filed through

Messrs Law Practice of Rafique.

The five plaintiffs named Azhar, Azalina, Deputy Speaker Datuk Mohd Rashid Hasnon and Dewan Rakyat secretary Nizam Mydin Bacha Mydin as the first, second, third and fourth defendants respectively.

The plaintiffs sought a declaration that the seat of the Speaker had been vacant since July 13 and the appointments of Azhar, or better known as Art Harun, and Azalina were invalid and unconstitutional.

They also sought a declaration that the appointment of Azhar and Azalina had contradicted Article 57 of Federal Constitution and Order 3, 4, 6, and 47 of Dewan Rakyat Standing Orders.

They sought a declaration that

once the posts were vacated during Parliament sessions, MPs have 14 days to submit the names for candidates to fill the positions and that debate and voting must be done in order to make the appointments legitimate.

In his supporting affidavit, Dr Mahathir said that all the MPs were denied their 14-day period to submit names for candidacy to fill the positions.

He said that if the court did not rectify the situation, all Parliament sittings from July 13 onwards would potentially be null and void, thus further making all the Bills and debates null and void.

He contended that the court had the inherent power and jurisdiction to hear the matter in the originating summons as provided

under Article 121 of the Federal Constitution.

On July 13, Azhar, who is the former Election Commission chairman, was appointed as the new Speaker replacing former Court of Appeal judge Tan Sri Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof, who was removed through bloc voting.

This was despite protests from Opposition MPs who questioned the legitimacy of the motion submitted by Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Meanwhile, Azalina made history when she became the first woman Deputy Speaker.

She replaced DAP's Teluk Intan MP, Nga Kor Ming, who resigned from the post before a motion to remove him could be tabled in Parliament.

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