

## 2 DEFAMATION TRIALS

# Dr M, Zahid's suits against each other delayed

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Two defamation trials involving Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi have been postponed.

Dr Mahathir's defamation suit against Zahid for questioning his racial origins, which was fixed to begin on Sept 11, has been postponed to Feb 13 next year.

Meanwhile, Zahid's defamation suit against the former prime minister over allegations that the former used his position to influence Dr Mahathir to interfere in his criminal cases in court, which was scheduled for next week, has been postponed to a date yet to be determined.

Dr Mahathir's counsel, Mior Nor Haidir Suhaimi, confirmed this when contacted.

"Both cases are postponed. We are expecting the court to fix a new date for Zahid's defamation suit against my client on Monday. My client's defamation suit against Zahid will commence from Feb 13 to 16 next year," he said.

Zahid, who filed the defamation suit on April 20 last year, argued that Dr Mahathir had issued defamatory statements with malicious intent against him at a Pejuang event at Yayasan Kepimpinan Perdana, Putrajaya, on Feb 23, 2022.

The event was held during the run-up to the 15th Johor election.

The Bagan Datuk member of parliament claimed that the statements meant that he was a person who used shortcuts to resolve and postpone his ongoing court cases and used his position to influence Dr Mahathir to in-

terfere in his criminal trials and investigations by law enforcement agencies.

Zahid said the statements tarnished and damaged his reputation and good name, as well as his credibility as Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman.

He is seeking general, aggravated and exemplary damages, interest, as well as an order to compel the defendant to publish an unconditional written apology in a newspaper to be determined by him (Zahid) and costs, as well as other relief deemed fit by the court.

In Dr Mahathir's defamation suit against Zahid, the former prime minister claimed that Zahid had issued a false, slanderous and malicious statement deliberately referring to the plaintiff during the Kelana Jaya Umno division meeting, on July 30, 2017.

The former Langkawi MP said the video recording of the event, which contained false and slanderous statements, was republished via Astro Awani's YouTube channel in a 2-minute and 40-second-long video clip.

Dr Mahathir, through the statement of claim, also said Zahid had malicious intent by issuing defamatory statements that exposed him to dissatisfaction and hatred within the community.

He said his status as a statesman and an influential political figure in the eyes of the world was also skewed, as a result.

Dr Mahathir said Zahid's statements made him appear to be a liar, untrustworthy, selfish, unethical while holding public office and unfit to be a leader or public figure.