

Dr M: No 'Kutty' stated anywhere on my IC

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad told the High Court here that Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi had lied to the public when he called him "Mahathir anak lelaki Iskandar Kutty".

Dr Mahathir, who testified in a lawsuit he initiated against the Deputy Prime Minister for alleged defamation, said that no such identification card (IC) referred to him by that name from the time he was born until he graduated from university.

"It was never written anywhere until Ahmad Zahid made the statement that supposedly he had an IC showing 'Mahathir anak lelaki Iskandar Kutty'. That is a lie by Ahmad Zahid," he said on the stand here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said he could not care less about the issue Ahmad Zahid spoke about when he (Ahmad Zahid) made the statement as he was only concerned with the alleged defamation Ahmad Zahid made about his ancestry.

In his witness statement, the nonagenarian said his birth name was "Mahathir bin Mohamad" and that he was born a Malay Muslim, as evidenced by his IC and birth certificate.

"My father is Mohamad bin Iskandar and my mother is Wan Tempawan binti Wan Hanapi.

"My father hails from Penang and is a Malay but my ancestors had roots in southern India, which is Kerala.

"My mother hails from Kedah and is pure Malay," he said.

On July 20 last year, Dr Mahathir filed the lawsuit against Ahmad

Zahid, 70, as the sole defendant, for allegedly issuing defamatory statements regarding the issue.

In his statement of claim, Dr Mahathir, 99, claimed that Ahmad Zahid had issued a defamatory statement against him during an Umno divisional meeting in Kelana Jaya on July 30, 2017.

The statement was reproduced on Astro Awani's YouTube and several online news portals, which are easily accessible by Internet users without restrictions.

Dr Mahathir claimed that the slanderous statement meant that he was not born a Malay or a Muslim with the alleged original name of "Mahathir, son of Iskandar Kutty" and that he claimed to be a Malay when he became prime minister to gain political and personal advantage apart from belittling Malaysians of Indian Muslim descent.

In his statement of defence, Ahmad Zahid denied that the statement made on July 30, 2017 was malicious and slanderous and harmed the reputation of the plaintiff in the public eye.

The Umno president claimed that the name "Mahathir son of Iskandar Kutty" refers to an individual based on the information in an old copy of an identity card.

He also claimed that he has no control over any video publication regarding his statement on the media platform.

The hearing continues before Judicial Commissioner Gan Techiong today.