

## DEFAMATION SUIT

# Zahid's jibe an insult to me, says Dr M

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad deemed Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's "Mahathir a/l Iskandar Kutty" remark as a personal insult to him, the High Court heard yesterday.

The former prime minister said the remark by Zahid, who is deputy prime minister and Umno president, was a lie that had affected his reputation and popularity as a senior politician, making him less popular among Malay voters.

"Any idiot can understand that he (Zahid) tried to depict me as a non-Malay by using 'anak lelaki (son of) Iskandar Kutty'.

"I filed this suit because he insulted me by raising the 'Kutty issue', which touches on my lineage.

"Malays do not use 'son of' but instead use 'bin' in their names.

"His entire statement is false... his intent was to portray me as pretending to be Mahathir Mohamad," he said during a cross-examination by Zahid's lawyer,

Mohamed Shahrul Fazli Kamarulzaman.

He was testifying as a witness in his defamation suit against Zahid's remarks in 2017, alleging that his real name was Mahathir a/l Iskandar Kutty.

Dr Mahathir also said his defamation suit against Zahid was in response to the latter's lawsuit.

Zahid's lawsuit claimed Dr Mahathir accused him of seeking intervention in his criminal case.

The former Langkawi member of parliament filed the suit three months after Zahid filed a suit against him in April 2022.

Shahrul Fazli questioned Dr Mahathir on why he took five years to file the suit against Zahid.

Dr Mahathir responded that it was his right to do so as the public still remembered the remarks, especially since they were made by Zahid.

"I had got a lot of things to do. I had to handle a lot of other businesses as a prime minister.

"But along the way, I realise



*Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad*

what he (Zahid) said was believed by some people."

Dr Mahathir said his suit was not an afterthought or something that came up only after he was no longer in power.

On July 20, 2022, he filed the suit, naming Zahid as the defendant.

His suit stated that the plaintiff genuinely believes that the defendant's reference in the alleged defamatory statement to "that person", "he" and "Mahathir, the son of Iskandar Kutty", explicitly referred to him.

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

The statement made him out to be a liar, untrustworthy, selfish and unethical while holding public office and unfit to be a leader or public figure, he said.

The proceedings before judicial commissioner Gan Techiong continue tomorrow.