

Kalimullah And Chang Reach Settlement Over Suits
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 10 (Bernama) -- Businessman Datuk Seri Kalimullah Masheerul Hassan and lawyer Matthias Chang Wen Chieh today reached an amicable settlement over a RM50 million defamation suit and RM150 million counter claim respectively.

High Court Judge Datuk Asmabi Mohamed recorded the terms of the settlement in chambers between Kalimullah who was represented by counsel Prakash Menon and Chang, who was represented by counsel Datuk R.K. Nathan.

Nathan told reporters that he read out the settlement statement.

He said both plaintiff and defendant had unreservedly withdrawn and retracted all allegations relating to the suits and that there was no order as to costs.

Nathan said by mutual consent, the plaintiff (Kalimullah) and the defendant (Chang) had reached an amicable settlement.

He said the defendant unreservedly withdrew and retracted all allegations he made against Kalimullah during a press conference held on June 13, 2006 and apologised to him and ECM Libra (an investment banking group) for any embarrassment caused to him and the company as a result.

"The plaintiff (Kalimullah) withdrew and retracted all allegations he had made in respect of his article on June 11, 2006 in the New Sunday Times with regard to the then Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's meeting with former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Japan and also apologised to Dr Mahathir for any embarrassment caused thereby," he said.

Meanwhile, Chang told reporters that he felt vindicated as Kalimullah had unreservedly apologised over the allegations on Dr Mahathir in his article.

"To me it was important that Tun Dr Mahathir had been vindicated as well," he said.

Kalimullah also said that he felt vindicated and glad that the allegations had been withdrawn, as well as for the apology and retraction made by the defendant.

"My family, friends and I have gone through tremendous stress and duress because of these baseless allegations," he said.

"I accept his apology with an open mind and want to move on. This should never have happened but I am glad it is over," said Kalimullah.

Kalimullah had filed the defamation suit on June 29, 2006 after Chang had allegedly made statements against him on June 13 the same year at a press conference, a report of which was published in the Singapore Straits Times through its Malaysian correspondent, Leslie Lau.

Chang, previously a political secretary to Dr Mahathir, filed a counter-claim against Kalimullah on July 14, 2006, seeking RM150 million in damages among others.

The settlement came while the suit was still being heard in court with the hearing scheduled to continue today. The court before this had heard Kalimullah's testimony while the defendant had yet to present his case.

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