

Dr M's former aide says sorry to Kalimullah
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 10 — Lawyer Matthias Chang today apologised to Datuk Seri Kalimullah Hassan for calling the businessman a traitor, describing him as corrupt during a June 13, 2006 press conference, and has withdrawn and retracted his remarks.

Chang was sued for RM50 million by Kalimullah, a former New Straits Times Press (NSTP) deputy chairman, for uttering defamatory remarks against him during the press conference.

Kalimullah said he was glad the matter was over. — Picture courtesy of www.limkokwing.net

The remarks were later carried in a report in Singapore's Straits Times by journalist Leslie Lau.

According to Lau's report, Chang had launched a "blustering, often rambling attack at an hour-long press conference" against detractors of former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Kalimullah had during the course of the trial denied Chang's allegations, which included being a traitor and corrupt about his role in ECM Libra Bhd, the investment banking group where currently the former NSTP man sits as shareholder and non-executive chairman.

In a court settlement between the two today, Chang apologised to both Kalimullah and ECM-Libra for any embarrassment caused by his allegations.

Kalimullah in turn agreed to withdraw and retract allegations made in a New Sunday Times article on June 11, 2006 with regards to former Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's meeting Dr Mahathir in Japan and apologised to the latter for any embarrassment caused.

An aide of Dr Mahathir had clarified the matter soon after the article came out which was also published by the News Straits Times.

Kalimullah said today he felt "vindicated" now that Chang had withdrawn his "baseless allegations" and apologised unreservedly.

"This should never have happened but I am glad it is over.

"I was prepared to go through the court case to clear my name but accepted the defendant's offer to apologise and withdraw all his allegations as we both want to move on," said Kalimullah in a statement.

Chang, who is Dr Mahathir's long-time loyalist and former political secretary, had said in the 2006 press conference that "you are the cobra doing the work of our enemies. You are a traitor" in reference to Kalimullah.

The lawyer had reportedly referred to Dr Mahathir as a "Malay hero" and proceeded to say that he would "spit" in the faces of Malays who dared to disrespect the former prime minister.

Chang had been due to take the stand today.

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