

As Zahid rises in Umno, that assault case just won't go away
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BY V. ANBALAGAN, ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi is a rising star in the Umno polls but an assault case involving a businessman could derail his chances of keeping his vice-presidency.

Lawyer Karpal Singh has written to the High Court to reopen client Amir Bazli Abdullah's assault suit against Ahmad Zahid.

The veteran lawyer told The Malaysian Insider that he was unhappy at being kept in the dark on the purported mediation exercise where both parties were said to have reached an out-of-court settlement last July.

Karpal was irked as lawyers for both parties were excluded from the mediation exercise before Sessions Court judge Rohani Ismail.

Only the plaintiff, Amir Bazli, and Ahmad Zahid met Rohani who later ordered that the terms and conditions of the settlement be kept confidential.

"I have now written to the High Court, seeking that this case be re-opened," Karpal said.

"This case was supposed to be heard in August. The trial judge has to be informed on the status of the matter even though a mediation was conducted and the case was said to be settled.

"Usually, the trial judge will record the status of the case and then strike out the matter if the parties had indeed settled without contest," he said.

Karpal Singh says he hasn't been able to contact Amir Bazli. – The Malaysian Insider pic, October 10, 2013. Karpal Singh says he hasn't been able to contact Amir Bazli. – The Malaysian Insider pic, October 10, 2013. However, Karpal said, a new trial date could be fixed if litigants were unhappy over the terms of settlement agreed during mediation.

He said Amir Bazli could not be contacted since the mediation exercise.

"He has gone missing. He has not answered my calls nor kept in touch with me.

"Prior to this, he was contactable and would come to my office regularly to discuss the case," he said, adding that the last time he met Amir Bazli was after the mediation on July 18.

"He told me he was confused. I advised him to get back to me after celebrating Hari Raya in Kota Baru, but he never showed up," he said.

Karpal said Rohani also vacated the trial dates scheduled in August after she deemed the matter was concluded.

"A mediator and Sessions Court judge who is inferior to the High Court judge has no power to vacate the trial dates," said the veteran lawyer.

After the mediation exercise, Ahmad Zahid revealed that Amir Bazli had apologised to him.

"He apologised to me during the mediation and I forgave him," Ahmad Zahid told The Malaysian Insider.

Amir Bazli filed the suit against Ahmad Zahid in July 2007 alleging that the then deputy minister punched him in the face at the Country Heights Recreational Club in Kajang, Selangor.

He said Ahmad Zahid also threatened to kill him and that he was held in wrongful confinement at the latter's home in Country Heights.

Ahmad Zahid denied the allegations, saying Amir Bazli had concocted the whole story.

He filed a counter-claim, stating he suffered humiliation and emotional trauma as a result of Amir Bazli's accusation.

Amir Bazli had also lodged a police report against Ahmad Zahid but no action was taken by the public prosecutor. - October 10, 2013.

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