

Mahathir, Muhyiddin to give evidence in suit against PM's press secretary

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Four days have been set aside from July 13 to hear the case filed by Mukhriz Mahathir against Tengku Sariffuddin Tengku Ahmad for defamation.

KUALA LUMPUR: Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Muhyiddin Yassin will turn up in court as witnesses for Mukhriz Mahathir who is suing the prime minister's press secretary Tengku Sariffuddin Tengku Ahmad for defamation.

Mukhriz's lawyer Mohamed Haniff Khatri Abdulla said his client would take the witness' stand when the trial began on July 13.

"His other witnesses are Dr Mahathir and Muhyiddin," he told reporters after a case management before justice Ahmad Zaidi Ibrahim today.

Haniff said the court had fixed July 14 and Oct 19 and 20 as the other trial dates.

Meanwhile, Tengku Sariffuddin's lawyer, Ooi Shee Yi, said his client and two others would testify as defence witnesses.

On May 3 last year, Mukhriz, the former Kedah menteri besar and incumbent Ayer Hitam assemblyman, filed the suit over four media statements issued by Tengku Sariffuddin on April 15, 20, 23, and 26. (2016)

The four press releases were "Prime Minister's Press Secretary's Statement on Donation Confirmation by Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister", "Prime Minister's Press Secretary's Statement on Former DPM's Reuters Interview", "Mukhriz Mahathir Statement: Response by Prime Minister's Press Secretary" and "Prime Minister's Press Secretary's Statement on Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir".

In his defence Tengku Sariffuddin said he had never defamed Mukhriz in any of his media statements seeking to clarify issues and untruths spread about Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Tengku Sariffuddin said the statements were published based on qualified privilege and without malice.

He said his media statements were made in his official capacity to prevent rumours or political allegations against the prime minister.

In another High Court, Haniff said Dr Mahathir, Muhiyiddin , DAP Parliamentary leader Lim Kit Sing and two others had been lined up to testify in a suit brought by Mukhriz against former DAP vice-chairman Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim.

Mukhriz had filed a defamation suit over a claim by Tunku Aziz that the former Kedah menteri besar had plotted to become the next prime minister.

Mukhriz said statements by Tunku Aziz on December 30 last year and January 3 this year painted him as being power crazy.

He said Tunku Aziz had also accused him of plotting with his father, Dr Mahathir, and Lim to achieve his goal.

The suit was filed by Mukhriz's lawyer Haniff Khatri at the Kuala Lumpur High Court.

Tunku Aziz had alleged that Mukhriz betrayed his political allies and the public when he concealed the plot to make him the prime minister and Lim his deputy.

This allegation was made by Tunku Aziz in a blog posting called AIDC News.

Mukhriz, who is PPBM deputy president, said Tunku Aziz's remarks were uttered in bad faith.

"He is making such accusations to create public hatred against me," Mukhriz said in his statement of claim.

Ooi, who also represented Tunku Aziz, said his client and two other witnesses would give evidence for the defence.

This suit would be heard before justice Nor Bee Ariffin who has fixed the trial to begin on Nov 27.

Nor Bee has also fixed January 11, 12, 18 and 19 for the continuation of the trial.

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