

Injunction against former Mahathir aide

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PETALING JAYA: The High Court yesterday granted New Straits Times Press Bhd deputy chairman Datuk Kalimullah Hassan an *ex parte* injunction against lawyer Matthias Chang, restraining him from repeating allegations made at a June 13 press conference.

Kalimullah's counsel, Prakash Menon, said the order by Justice Datuk Kang Hwee Gee restrained Chang from repeating the words he had used at the press conference, pending trial for defamation in which Kalimullah had claimed damages of RM50 million.

On June 13, Chang challenged Kalimullah and Umno Youth deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin to a debate on controversial issues raised by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Chang was Mahathir's former political secretary.

The foreign press and some local newspapers covered Chang's press conference during which he also swore on five holy books, including the Quran.

Singapore's *The Straits Times*, which formerly employed Kalimullah as its correspondent, was among those which reported the matter.

Menon said the case only involved Chang, and not *The Straits Times* as it had complied with a demand for an apology and satisfied other claims.

Earlier, Menon said, a demand letter was issued to Chang, asking him to apologise and pay damages.

However, Chang replied that he did not know what they were talking about and instead filed a counter-suit for RM100 million for an article that Kalimullah had written on June 11, which Chang claimed defamed him.

Meanwhile, Singapore Press

Holdings Ltd published an "unreserved apology" to Kalimullah in yesterday's edition of *The Straits Times* for an article it published on June 14.

Entitled "Mahathir loyalist blasts Abdullah's supporters", the article quoted assertions made by Chang at the June 13 press conference.

Chang was said to have launched a "blustering, often rambling attack at an hour-long press conference".

"We wish to clarify that we do not in any way endorse or confirm the assertions made against Kalimullah," the newspaper said.

"We further acknowledge that we have no basis to make the assertions.

"We unreservedly apologise to Kalimullah for any distress, embarrassment and injury he has suffered on account of the article. We undertake not to make further assertions against Kalimullah to the same or similar effect," it said.