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Decision on Friday whether printer gets stay

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The High Court will decide on Friday whether to allow Star Papyrus Printing Sdn Bhd a stay of an order that it supply further and better particulars to businessman Mirzan Mahathir, who is suing it for RM150 million for libel.

Judge Datuk Hashim Yusof deferred decision today after hearing submissions in chambers by counsel for the respective parties.

Star Papyrus was given until Saturday to comply with the order issued on Aug 14 by court senior assistant registrar who had ruled that the printing company's defence would be struck out if it failed to carry out the order.

It then appealed against the order. Today's application for stay was made pending the disposal of the appeal.

Mirzan, the group executive chairman of Konsortium Perkapalan Bhd Group filed the suit on Jan 28, this year over Asian Wall Street Journal's article entitled Mahathir's Eldest Son Limits Ambitions written by G. Bruce Knecht, which was front-paged on Jan 4 this year.

Star Papyrus is a subsidiary of the Star Publications Bhd.

In his suit, Mirzan claimed a paragraph in the article meant he had built his business empire as a willing beneficiary of nepotism and privilege and not on his own ability.

He said his feelings, person, professional and business reputation were seriously damaged and brought into public scandal, odium and contempt.

Mirzan claimed the article gave the impression that he conducted his business affairs in an uncompetent or negligent manner and had only survived because he had used his position as the Prime Minister's son and was bailed out by the Government under his father's influence.

Star Papyrus contended in its defence that it merely provided a room for Dow Jones Publishing's equipment to receive the negative print of the contents of the AWSJ transmitted by Dow Jones by electronic signals from Hong Kong.

It also provided staff to operate the equipment, newsprint paper and service for platemaking and bundling the journal.

Star Papyrus contended that, in any event, Mirzan had consented to, or alternatively, assumed the risk of the widespread publication of the words by giving an interview, knowing that it would be published in a feature article.

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