

16 MAR 1999

Court-Mirzan

MIRZAN FILES AFFIDAVIT-IN-REPLY IN RM150 MILLION SUIT

KUALA LUMPUR, March 16 (Bernama) -- Mirzan Mahathir, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's eldest son, has filed an affidavit-in-reply in connection with his RM150 million libel suit against printer Star Papyrus Printing Sdn Bhd.

The affidavit-in-reply was filed by lawyer Datuk V. K. Lingam at the High Court Registrar's Office at Wisma Denmark here yesterday.

Mirzan is suing Star Papyrus, a subsidiary of Star Publications Malaysia Bhd, for an article published in the Asian Wall Street Journal (AWSJ) newspaper on Jan 4 this year with the headline "Mahathir's eldest son limits ambitions".

Star Papyrus is the printer of the Kuala Lumpur edition of AWSJ.

The front-page article detailed the career of Mirzan and how he was allegedly helped by banks and other companies in Malaysia on his way to success.

In his affidavit-in-reply, Mirzan said it was made firmly without prejudice to his right to file an application to strike off several paragraphs in the defendant's defence.

He said this was made on the ground that the said paragraphs did not reveal any reasonable defence and/or was frivolous, vexatious, may prejudice, obstruct or delay the trial of this action and/or is an abuse of the process of the court.

Mirzan said a letter which Hong Kong-based AWSJ journalist G. Bruce Knecht sent to him did not mention anything about the libellous words that were subsequently printed and published by the defendant.

Mirzan also contended that Knecht did not give any indication that Knecht wanted to write an article on the personal side of him and his relation with the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

He also did not expect the article to be published on the front page of AWSJ (in a manner causing damage to the plaintiff) together with other major stories alleging corruption and nepotism in Indonesia.

In its defence, Star Papyrus claimed that Mirzan has consented to and voluntarily accepted the risk of the so-called libellous words being published in the newspaper by granting Knecht an interview at Mirzan's office on Dec 2 last year.

-- BERNAMA

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