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Nov 18 mention for suits by Mirzan against two dailies

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The High Court today fixed Nov 18 for the mention of two defamation suits by businessman Mirzan Mahathir against two Chinese dailies pending a possible settlement.

Senior Assistant Registrar Wan Shahrudin Wan Ladin postponed the matter in chambers.

Mirzan is suing China Press Berhad and its editor-in-chief Poon Chau Huay, and Pemandangan Sinar Sdn Bhd (as publisher and printer of Sin Chew Jit Poh), Sin Chew's group editor-in-chief Liew Chen Chuan and its news editor Lim You Soon, for damages amounting to RM400 million.

The alleged defamatory articles in the newspapers on Jan 5 were translated versions of an article which was published on the front and fourth pages of the Jan 4 issue of the Asian Wall Street Journal.

In his statement of claim, Mirzan said the articles contained defamatory matters concerning his conduct and his business.

He said he had been gravely injured by the publication of the articles and claimed the allegations affected his character, integrity and reputation.

Mirzan is also seeking an injunction restraining the defendants from further publishing or causing to be published or distributing the defamatory words as well as interest and costs.

In their defence, the defendants said the facts and statements in the article were derived from the ASWJ report on Jan 4 and that the words were true in substance and fact.

They said that Mirzan had voluntarily assumed the risk of widespread publication of the words by giving an interview to ASWJ staff writer G. Bruce Knecht.

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