

Two dailies²³ apologise to Mirzan

They also undertake
not to repeat article

By N. PUSPA MALAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed: The publishers and printers of two Chinese dailies sued by Mirzan Mahathir for libel today unreservedly apologised to the businessman.

They also paid damages to the executive chairman of Konsortium Perkapalan Bhd.

Under the terms of settlement recorded by Justice Datuk Dr R.K. Nathan, the defendants will publish their apology on the front pages of *Sin Chew Jit Poh* and its sister daily, *Guang Ming*, along with Mirzan's photograph.

They also undertook not to repeat or publish the impugned article or any part of it or any similar words concerning Mirzan, the eldest son of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Mirzan had sued Pemandangan Sinar Sdn Bhd, the publisher and printer of *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, group editor-in-chief C.C. Liew and news editor Lim You Soon for RM200 million.

He also sued Guang-Ming Ribao Sdn Bhd, publisher of *Guang Ming*, group editor-in-chief Liew and editor-in-chief Yong Yeow Khoo for

the same amount.

The third suit for RM150 million was against Pemandangan Sinar as printer for *Guang Ming*.

Datuk V.K. Lingam and R. Thayalan appeared for Mirzan, and Datuk R.R. Sethu represented the defendants. Mirzan and Sin Chew group chief executive officer P.C. Liew were present in court.

Sethu said the defendants admitted publication of the impugned articles and accepted that they had hurt and injured Mirzan's personal and business reputation.

"The defendants unreservedly apologise to the plaintiff and have paid substantial damages to compensate him for the libel," he said.

In the suits filed in early February last year, Mirzan said he was defamed in certain articles appearing in the two dailies on Jan 5, which were translated versions of an article published in the Jan 4 issue of the *Asian Wall Street Journal*.

He said the articles meant that he had been given substantial and potentially-lucrative opportunities to invest in and develop business in Malaysia solely

because he was the eldest son of the Prime Minister.

The articles were also understood to mean that he had sought to build a business empire not upon his

own ability or merit but as a willing beneficiary of nepotism, favouritism and privilege, he said.

He claimed to have suffered grave injury by the

publication of the articles which insinuated that he had conducted his business affairs in "an incompetent or negligent manner" and had only survived because

he had exploited his position as the Prime Minister's son and permitted the government, under the influence of his father, to bail him out of his financial difficulties.