

Ahirudin withdraws striking out application
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Blogger Ahirudin Attan today agreed to withdraw his application to strike out a defamation suit brought against him by the New Straits Times Press (NSTP) and four others.

The withdrawal was allowed by the Kuala Lumpur High Court judge Mohamed Hishamuddin Mohamed Yunus in chambers today with no orders as to costs.

Mohamed Hishamuddin was to have heard that application today but with this latest development, he fixed June 28 to hear the application by NSTP and the other plaintiffs for an inter-parte injunction against Ahirudin.

In the injunction, the plaintiffs want the former Malay Mail editor to remove certain articles from his weblog and restrain him from further publishing articles defamatory to them.

The court also ordered Ahirudin to file his statement of defence before May 3.

Bername quoted Ahirudin's counsel Edmund Bon as saying that his client wanted to withdraw the application to strike out the suit as the plaintiffs' amended statement of claim was now more specific compared with the original statement.

"On Feb 16 2007, the plaintiffs amended the statement of claim by making it clearer and adding two more postings and 98 readers' comments. In our view, they have changed the character of the statement of claim, therefore we cannot proceed with the original statement of claim," said Bon.

Defamation and malicious falsehood

On Jan 4, NSTP, its deputy chairman Kalimullah Hassan; chief executive officer Syed Faisal Albar; group editor-in-chief Hishamuddin Aun and former group editor Brendan Pereira filed a suit against Ahirudin for defamation and malicious falsehood.

The suit pertained to certain articles and postings that had been published, or permitted to be published, by Ahirudin on his weblog.

They claimed that the articles referred to them and were defamatory.

Ahirudin had sought to strike out the suit on grounds that it was fatally deficient because it did not state the exact words in the publications.

The hearing in chambers today lasted close to an hour. The plaintiffs were represented by Cecil Abraham and Rishwant Singh.

Another blogger, Jeff Ooi of Screenshots fame, is similarly being sued by NSTP, Kalimullah, Hishamuddin and Pereira.