


Mercedes-Benz



Experience it now!
in Malaysia

replay ad

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune ASIA-PACIFIC

Subscribe to the newspaper
Find out more >>

- HOME
- BUSINESS ▾
- TECH
- TRAVEL
- STYLE
- CULTURE ▾
- HEALTH/SCI
- SPORTS
- REGIONS ▾
- OPINION
- PROPERTIES
- 0  CLIPPINGS

Malaysia's pro-government newspaper sues two bloggers for defamation

The Associated Press

Published: January 18, 2007

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: A pro-government Malaysian daily has sued two popular Internet bloggers for defamation in what a critic said Thursday would have a "chilling effect" on freedom of speech.

The lawsuits by English-language New Straits Times marked the first time Malaysian bloggers have been taken to court for publishing comments on the Internet in a country where much of the traditional media are controlled by political parties or the government.

The first suit was filed on Jan. 11 against Jeff Ooi, whose "Screenshots" blogs carry daily commentaries on the political situation in the country. The blog is widely read by Malaysians.

His case will be heard on Jan. 30. The other suit is against Ahiruddin Attan, filed on Tuesday, which will be heard on Jan. 25. Both bloggers disclosed on their Web sites Thursday that they had been sued for defamation.

A spokesman of the New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Bhd. group, which owns the newspaper, confirmed that the lawsuits were filed.

Today in Asia - Pacific

[Blair drawn into 'Big Brother' racial abuse row](#)

[Hong Kong to turn away pregnant mainland women](#)

[U.S. holds 'substantive' talks with North Korea](#)

"We are not seeking to close them down. At the same time we do not support people making defamatory statements whether online or in print," said the spokesman who cannot be identified under company rules. "We should allow the law to take its own course."

He did not elaborate further.

Ooi did not return a call for further comment, and Ahiruddin, who operates the blog "Rocky's Bru," couldn't immediately be reached.

The plaintiffs are the New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Bhd. group, the group's chief executive Syed Faisal Albar, former group editor-in-chief Kalimullah Masheerul Hassan, current group editor-in-chief Hishamuddin Aun and former Times editor Brendan Pereira.

Neither the plaintiffs nor the defendants elaborated on what invited the defamation lawsuits. But the Times is believed to have been angered by a series of articles since the middle of last year, alleging Kalimullah and Pereira were agents of neighboring Singapore.

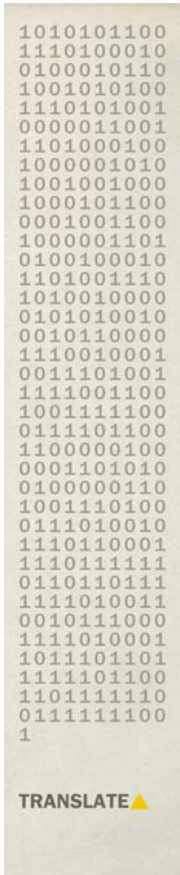
The two countries share uneasy relations and being branded a Singapore agent is considered a serious insult in Malaysia. Details of the articles cannot be reproduced because of their allegedly defamatory character.

Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang slammed the New Straits Times for the lawsuit, calling them a "grave development in the defense of the legal rights of bloggers and citizen journalists in Malaysia to break the stifling monopoly of the mainstream media."

He said the suits will have a "chilling effect on freedom of bloggers" because the high cost of litigation would "cripple and paralyze the individual blogger."

The amount of damages sought by the New Straits Times was not known.

- E-Mail Article
- Listen to Article
- Printer-Friendly
- 3-Column Format
- Translate
- Share Article
- Add to Clippings
- Text Size



[Home](#) > [Asia - Pacific](#)

[Back to top](#)

Most E-Mailed Articles

Last 24 Hours Last 7 Days Last 30 Days [Subscribe](#)

1. The lowly alpagata steps forward
2. The shifting power equation of globalization
3. For Beijing men, it's in the handbag
4. Ian McEwan's life takes twist with discovery of a brother
5. Internet pushes the concept of 'free' content, supported by advertising
6. Letter From Britain: Darker realities behind Britons' longing for Frangleterre
7. Another perspective, or jihad TV?
8. A bad plan for the Middle East
9. Hong Kong gets tough on pregnant mainland visitors
10. Sectarian hostility drives wedge against pan-Muslim unity



AudioNews: IHT.com on the go

Listen to IHT articles on your computer, and create custom podcasts for your portable music player. [Try it now.](#)

Ads by Google

Malaysia Holidays

Find 8 Malaysia Holidays sites Search Malaysia Holidays sites [findme-8.com](#)

Get more blog traffic.

Get more readers to your blog. Get links on related blogs. [www.flowchoice.com](#)

Defamation Laws

Simple answers to your complex defamation questions. [www.quizlaw.com](#)

Libel Law?

Straightforward Guide: What is the Difference Between Slander & Libel? [wisegeek.com](#)

More Features

[Blogs](#)
[Top Ten Articles](#)

The Newspaper

[Today's Page One in Europe](#)
[Today's Page One in Asia](#)
[IHT Electronic Edition](#)
[E-Mail the Editor](#)

Services

[Funds Insite](#)
[Classifieds](#)
[Advertise with the IHT](#)

Other Formats

[E-Mail Alerts](#)
[AudioNews](#)
[Mobile](#)
[RSS](#) [XML](#)



IHT Subscriptions
[Sign Up](#) | [Manage](#)

[Site Feedback](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Contributor Policy](#) | [Site Map](#)

[About the IHT](#) | [Privacy & Cookies](#) | [Contact the IHT](#)

Copyright © 2007 the International Herald Tribune All rights reserved **IHT**