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Court-Anwar (Group)

AZIZAN DENIES UMMI A MEMBER OF GROUP WITH MEGAT JUNID'S WIFE

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 9 (Bernama) -- Azizan Abu Bakar denied in the High Court here today that Ummi Hafilda Ali, the writer of a letter containing allegations of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's sexual misconduct, is a member of a group of which Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob's wife is also a member.

Azizan, the former driver of Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, said that he never told a former commando, Ma'amin Latip, about the matter.

Azizan, 38, the 12th prosecution witness, was testifying under cross-examination at Anwar's trial which entered its 23rd day today.

He said that Ma'amin and another person, Abdul Rahim Dhalan, better known as Rahim King, were Anwar's men who were always tailing after him.

Ma'amin and Rahim had also forced him to sign a statutory declaration denying his earlier sworn statement in which he alleged that Anwar had sodomised him, sent to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he said.

Azizan, who has taken the stand for the sixth day, was cross-examined by Gurbachan Singh, one of Anwar's nine lawyers at his trial on four charges of corrupt practice with using his position to interfere in police investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

Anwar, 51, is charged under Section 2(1) of the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance No 22 of 1970 which carries a maximum jail term of 14 years or a fine of RM20,000 or both on conviction.

Azizan was asked by Gurbachan Singh whether it was true that, when asked by Ma'amin as to who were the members of the group, he had said "one of them is Datuk Megat's wife, Ziela Jalil. Ah, let's not talk about them... I'm fed up". Azizan denied.

The question was objected to by Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail on the grounds that Azizan had told the court he did not tell Ma'amin about Ummi Hafilda's group.

He said that Gurbachan Singh could suggest it to Azizan instead of asking him the question.

The objection was allowed by Justice Datuk S. Augustine Paul who is hearing the case.

Gurbachan Singh then referred to the road accident in which Azizan's wife, who was in her seventh month of pregnancy, died.

To his suggestion, Azizan agreed that only his parents knew that they were making a trip to see them that day.

At this juncture, Justice Augustine Paul asked the defence whether the question on the accident was relevant.

He said that Azizan had already testified that there was nothing unusual about the accident in which his wife died.

Gurbachan Singh said: "Our defence is that all this (the charges against Anwar) never occur and it is all conspiracy. Our contention is this is part of a political conspiracy designed to bring him down".

Justice Augustine Paul then allowed Gurbachan Singh to asked another question on the matter.

Gurbachan Singh: Do you agree that you told Ma'amin "I was going back to spend the Hari Raya at my wife's kampung late at night. Only my mother who was ill and father knew about it...nobody else knew. It so happened that when I approached a junction, a car suddenly skidded and crashed into the left side of my car and my wife sustained injuries and later died. It's

not possible that Datuk Seri Anwar wanted to kill me and my family...my mother and father couldn't have told..."

Azizan: Yes, I do.

Azizan also told the court he did not know how his sworn statement in which he alleged that Anwar had sodomised him, was included in the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM" (50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Become PM).

To another question, Azizan said he knew that Anwar had a personal driver known as Sani and a police bodyguard by the name of Mokhtar.

He however disagreed with Gurbachan Singh's suggestion that Anwar only required his services occasionally, when he went out with his family members.

Azizan admitted that he had gone to the Finance Ministry to meet Anwar in June this year to find out the decision regarding a contract involving one of his company's directors, Datuk Taufik Yap Abdullah.

He however said that Anwar did not meet him then but the night on the same day at Anwar's house after being informed by Anwar's aide-de-camp, ASP Zull Aznam Haron, that Anwar wanted to see him.

Azizan disagreed with Gurbachan Singh's suggestion that the meeting was requested by him through Zull Aznam as he wanted to see Anwar over a personal matter.

He also said that he could not remember telling Anwar about him "wanting to lead a new life" but admitted he had said that he had "nothing to do with the book or its author".

He said he was not sure where he had said "I'm sorry for what has happened. It will not happen again."

Azizan disagreed with counsel's suggestion that at the meeting, Anwar had not asked him to make a denial.

He also disagreed with Gurbachan Singh's suggestion that Rahim and Ma'amin were not Anwar's men but were his friends.

To another question, Azizan said that lawyer Karpal Singh, whom he met with Ummi Hafilda, did not advise him to lodge a police report on incidents when he and Ummi Hafilda were tailed after by people they did not know.

To another question, Azizan said that he was not sure whether Rahim and Ma'amin had given any instructions to lawyer Sukdev Singh pertaining to the statutory declaration denying allegations in his sworn statement sent to the prime minister.

He was also not sure whether he had told Sukdev Singh that the sworn statement had been incorporated in the book "50 Dalil...".

Azizan however denied having told Sukdev Singh that he had been used by certain quarters in the past.

Before the court adjourned for lunch, Justice Augustine Paul told the defence that if they intend to impeach Azizan's credibility, they need to make a formal application.

He said that most of the questions posed by Gurbachan Singh especially on the statutory declaration "may preclude the attempt to impeach the witness".

Gurbachan Singh said that he would continue his cross-examination in the afternoon session.

He also said that he was in a dilemma and would consider Justice Augustine Paul's advice before making any decision.

-- BERNAMA

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