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LEAD Court-Anwar

I ADMITTED TO THE PM OF BEING SODOMISED, SAYS AZIZAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 8 (Bernama) -- Azizhan Abu Bakar told the High Court here today that he admitted to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that he had been sodomised by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said he made the admission when he met the prime minister for over an hour beginning 9.10 pm at his official residence on Aug 24 this year.

"I admitted to the prime minister that what is contained in my sworn statement is true," he said.

Azizhan, the former driver of Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, was testifying under cross-examination at the trial of the former deputy prime minister and former finance minister on four charges of corrupt practice for 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 fine of RM20,000 or both on conviction.

Azizhan, 38, the 12th prosecution witness, has been in the witness box for five days.

Cross-examined by Gurbachan Singh, Azizhan said the meeting called by the prime minister proceeded without anyone else present, not even Special Branch Director Datuk Yusof Abdul Rahman, who brought him to see the prime minister, and Ummi Hafilda Ali, the sister of Anwar's former private secretary, Mohamed Azmin Ali.

Ummi Hafilda is the writer of the letter "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri" (The Matter of the Misconduct of the Deputy Prime Minister), dated Aug 5, 1997, which was sent to the prime minister. Azizhan's sworn statement alleging that Anwar had sodomised him was attached to the letter.

Asked whether the prime minister assured him that he would be protected, Azizhan said: "The prime minister stated that if my safety is threatened, I should contact the nearest police station."

He said although he had not lodged any police report regarding his safety, his house and place of work were always watched by the police.

Gurbachan Singh: Is that the PM's only advice to you (regarding the lodging of police reports)?.

Azizhan: The prime minister did say that he will ask the police to probe deeper into the case and advised me to be extra careful about my safety.

Azizhan said he did not tell the prime minister about the statutory declaration he had signed to deny the alleged sodomy against him by Anwar as contained in the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM" (50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Become PM).

Asked whether Ummi Hafilda had told him that she had been called by the prime minister, Azizhan said: "Ummi did not tell me whether or not she had been called to meet the PM".

Gurbachan Singh: Did you, together with Ummi, go to see the prime minister at his office after the court proceedings yesterday?.

Azizhan: No. After the hearing, I went straight home.

Azizhan also told the court that a road mishap which killed his expectant wife and their unborn child earlier this year was a normal accident.

He said he did not suspect that the deaths of his wife and the unborn child were out of a deliberate act or had involved Anwar.

Gurbachan Singh: Do you agree that the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM" does mention about the accident? That although your wife had died in an accident, a part of the book "50 Dalil" insinuates that Anwar was involved in this murder of your wife?

Before Azizan could reply, the judge asked Azizan whether he had read the book and Azizan answered "I have not read or seen the book".

When asked by Gurbachan Singh whether he had suggested to anyone that Anwar had a part in the accident, Azizan replied that he had not as "it was a normal road accident".

Gurbachan Singh: Did the police ask whether there is a connection between the accident and the letter "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri?"

Azizan: The police did not ask me whether the accident has any connection with the letter but I did tell them that the accident report could be obtained from the Rawang police station. Police only asked me how the accident happened.

While displaying a copy of the accident report and the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Ibrahim Tidak Boleh Jadi PM", Gurbachan Singh asked Azizan to read pages 81 to 87 of the book.

The last paragraph of page 86 reads: "On Jan 31, 1998, the second day of Aidil Fitri, the car in which Azizan was travelling with his six-month pregnant wife and their two children +was rammed+ by another unidentified vehicle and subsequently his wife and their unborn child died while Azizan and the two children survived."

Another paragraph of page 86 reads: "A fortnight earlier (middle of Ramadan) the door of Umami's (Hafilda Ali, writer of the letter +Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri+ or the misconduct of the deputy prime minister) home was sprayed with blood and upon investigation the Chemistry Department confirmed that it was dog's blood and a police report was lodged."

To another question, Azizan said he signed a statutory declaration denying what was said about him in the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM" because he was scared and was forced to.

He said that before that he had been contacted several times by two men, Abdul Rahim Dhalan (better known as Rahim King) and Ma'amin Latip, asking him to prepare the statutory declaration to deny, among other things, that he had been sodomised by Anwar. They had also constantly followed him.

On his meeting with a commissioner of oath, during which he was accompanied by a lawyer whom he referred to as just Sukdev, Azizan said he did not tell the commissioner Ngui Kee Heong that the contents of the statutory declaration were not true because the commissioner was asking Sukdev a lot of questions.

Azizan said the commissioner did not ask him any questions before he signed, and he denied counsel's suggestion that he was lying.

Earlier, Azizan testified that he told Sukdev he was not involved in writing or circulating the "50 Dalil..." book.

To another question, Azizan said he had a feeling that he had been libelled over the publication and distribution of the book "50 Dalil..."

"I am not quite sure how the publication and distribution of the book "50 Dalil..." could libel me. It is only a feeling I have," he said, adding that he had that feeling because he was said to be involved in the writing and publication of the book.

Azizan said he expressed that feeling to Ma'amin, who he alleged is Anwar's man and who was constantly with him.

He said he was told that Rahim King, another of Anwar's men, had given instructions that Ma'amin should be with him at all times to ensure his

safety.

He denied Gurbachan Singh's suggestion that nobody had threatened him into signing the statutory declaration or had issued instructions to the lawyer to prepare the statutory declaration for him to sign.

He disagreed with another suggestion that he had made the statutory declaration voluntarily.

Before the court adjourned for the day at 4pm, Gurbachan Singh told the court that he would wind up the cross-examination tomorrow.

Earlier, in response to the defence's intention to impeach the testimony of Azizan, Paul suggested that such proceedings be held at the end of the prosecution case.

He, however, told both the prosecution and defence to prepare their submissions on the matter.

Today's trial had attracted a bigger crowd to the compound of the High Court located within the Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad, with their interest apparently stirred by Azizan's testimony yesterday contradicting his earlier statements that he had been sodomised by Anwar.

Some of them had come as early as 1am armed with mats to spend the night there, hoping to be able to follow the proceedings.

At the end of today's hearing, Anwar's lawyers and reporters who emerged from the court were swarmed by people enquiring about the day's proceedings.

The trial will resume at 9am tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

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