

13 JAN 1999

Court-Anwar (Mahathir)

ANWAR'S LAWYERS PLAN TO CALL MAHATHIR AS DEFENCE WITNESS

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 13 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's defence counsel told the High Court here today that the defence in his corruption trial plans to call Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and three other Cabinet ministers as its witnesses.

Christopher Fernando said the defence planned to call Dr Mahathir to testify at the trial together with Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob and former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor, if the court orders Anwar to enter his defence.

"In the event the defence is called, we would like to call the prime minister, number two (is) Tun Daim Zainuddin," Fernando said after Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail told the court that the prosecution was wrapping up its case on the four corruption charges against Anwar. The trial began on Nov 2.

The trial, which entered its 45th day today, attracted international attention.

The court will decide whether to call Anwar to enter his defence after both sides have finished their submissions at the end of prosecution's case. The court has ordered the defence and the prosecution to submit tomorrow.

Earlier, Justice Datuk S. Augustine Paul, who is presiding over case, allowed the prosecution to amend the four charges against the former deputy prime minister and former finance minister.

The judge said that after considering the original charges and the proposed amendments, he was of the view that apart from terminology, there was no substantive changes in the proposed amendments.

Anwar, 51, is charged with abusing his position by interfering in police investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

He 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.

The prosecution has called 23 witnesses including Ummi Hafilda Ali, the writer of the letter "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri" (The Matter Of The Misconduct Of The Deputy Prime Minister), which was sent to Dr Mahathir, and Azizan Abu Bakar, who claimed he has been sodomised by Anwar.

Fernando made the application to call the witnesses after Abdul Gani offered the defence 47 witnesses who are on a list and said that the prosecution would make available witnesses not listed.

The defence however decided to call 22 witnesses from the list, and Rafidah who is not listed.

The other witnesses the defence plans to call are Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin (Dr Mahathir's political secretary), Datuk Ismail Che Ros (former Criminal Investigation Department director), Abdul Khalid alias Khalid Jafri Bakar Shah (the author of "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM"), Abdul Rahim Dahalan, Khairuddin Abu Hassan (the agent of the "50 Dalil" book), Ma'amin Latip, Mohamad Azmin Ali (Anwar's former private secretary), Mohamed Azman Ali (Mohamed Azmin's brother), Mohamed Taib Solomon (ex-police officer), Norlia Ali (Ummi Hafilda's sister), Normala Mohamad Yusof and Norzilah Jalil (Megat Junid's second wife).

The defence also plans to call Dr Ristina Majid (the owner of the house where Ummi Hafilda and Aziznan, Anwar's wife former driver, were arrested), Shamsidar Taharin (Mohamed Azmin's wife and the woman alleged to have sexual relationship with Anwar), Datuk Sng Chee Hua (politician-bussinessman who the defence alleges has a conversation with Ummi Hafilda, which was taped), Tan Beng Kim, Zamrah Lajis and Zull Aznam Haji Haron (Anwar's former aide-de-camp).

The court will heard submissions from both sides tomorrow.

After the defence finished listing out their chosen witnesses, Paul rejected their application to re-call Ummi Hafilda for further cross-examination on the content of the tapes which the defence claimed could prove their conspiracy theory.

Today, Fernando also applied to the court for the return of Anwar's diaries which were seized from his office and his house which he claimed would help the defence.

The judge however said he could not order the police to hand over the diaries as they were not court exhibits and asked the counsel to discuss it with the prosecution.

Earlier, when the court resumed after a two-hour break, to enable the defence to go through the evidence before deciding whether to recall any witnesses after the court has allowed the prosecution to amend the charges against Anwar, Raja Aziz told the court that they decided not to recall any prosecution witnesses.

Among those present in the packed courtroom were Prof Chandra Muzaffar, the president of International Movement For A Just World and several old boys of the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar who came wearing their college tie.

Anwar was seen showing the tie to the people in the public gallery before he proceeded to wear it in court today.

-- BERNAMA

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