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Court-Anwar (Conspiracy)

ANWAR ENTERS HIS DEFENCE ON SODOMY CHARGE

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, making his defence in his sodomy trial in the High Court here, mentioned four names as "master conspirators" for his downfall.

The four mentioned by the former deputy prime minister, who began testifying today, were First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob, former Melaka Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's political secretary Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin.

"In the initial stage, they were the master conspirators. Later, there were others, involving departments and individuals who were used," he said.

Anwar, 52, is jointly tried with his adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, 38, on separate charges of sodomising his wife's former driver, Azizan Abu Bakar, 39, at Sukma's apartment in Tivoli Villa, Bangsar, one night at 7.45, between January and March, 1993.

Sukma faces another charge of abetting Anwar in committing the offence, at the same time and place.

Anwar mentioned the four names when asked by his leading counsel, Christopher Fernando, those he had informed the prime minister to be involved in a conspiracy to topple him.

He also stated the reasons why they had wanted to do so.

Earlier, Anwar told the court that he had also informed Dr Mahathir of the five corruption charges proposed to be preferred by Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah against International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

Anwar said he knew of the matter through the attorney-general.

Mohtar, who is leading the prosecution's team in the trial, was not present in court during Anwar's testimony.

At the outset, Anwar, who is the first defence witness, told the court that his address is the Sungai Buloh Prison and when asked regarding his occupation, he said that he was unemployed.

This was followed by laughter from members of the public in the courtroom and they were ticked off by the judge. A warning was then issued by police personnel on duty there.

When asked by Fernando regarding Abdul Rahim, Anwar said that the former Melaka Chief Minister was definitely active in planning a conspiracy to cause his downfall, since 1997.

"I have also received a proposed charge against him (Abdul Rahim) from the attorney-general for corruption with proof that he held a RM39 million account in his name.

"With the document, I referred the matter to the prime minister and submitting the views of the ACA (Anti Corruption Agency) and the attorney-general. Just like Rafidah's corruption case, the prime minister brushed it aside," he said.

Anwar said that he had informed the prime minister of the matter on the request of the ACA and the attorney-general.

"It was a heavy task but because I had an excellent relationship with the prime minister and I had personally and openly expressed loyalty to him, I had no choice but to convey the information even though it displeases him," he said.

Anwar said that some of the information conveyed to Dr Mahathir were

with documentation, provided by the attorney-general.

He said that the first was Rafidah's case which he had to inform the prime minister to protect the image and credibility of the Attorney-General's Chambers and the ACA.

"The attorney-general asked me for a favour but I became the victim for doing a favour," he said.

Anwar said that the ACA and the attorney-general faced problems when they decide to prosecute as they could not proceed because the prime minister would not agree to it.

Asked regarding Daim, Anwar said that he (Daim) was still asking for Treasury files to be brought to his (Daim's) office even though he (Anwar) had taken over the finance portfolio, by Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, the Entrepreneur Development Minister and Second Finance Minister.

"I forbid it and reported the matter to the prime minister," said Anwar.

He said that he also obtained documents showing that Daim received shares and cash exceeding RM600 million from three corporate leaders.

Anwar claimed that the money was given to Daim when he (Daim) was finance minister and Dr Mahathir had been informed of the matter.

According to Anwar, the prime minister, as usual, brushed it aside.

He mentioned the three corporate leaders as Tan Sri Halim Saad, Tan Sri Wan Azmi Hamzah and Tan Sri Tajuddin Ramli, when the court allowed him to prove the conspiracy theory in his defence.

Anwar said that the prime minister did not take any action.

Regarding Megat Junid, Anwar said that he had asked the prime minister to explain the minister's involvement in the murder of a woman by the name of Mustakizah.

"...and the habit of Datuk Seri Megat Junid to gamble in the office. I brought up this matter with the prime minister," he said.

Megat Junid was then Deputy Home Minister.

Anwar said that he sought an explanation from the prime minister following numerous questions raised in parliament and speeches regarding Megat Junid over the issue.

Asked by Fernando regarding the murder case, Anwar said he told the prime minister what he heard about Megat Junid but the prime minister, as usual, gave his standard "I will look into it" reply.

"When I raised the matter with the prime minister...firstly, the case involved complicity. I therefore asked the prime minister as Home Minister to obtain information and if indeed Datuk Seri Megat Junid was not involved at all, his name could be cleared because at that time he was Deputy Home Minister.

"Secondly, the case of gambling. I appealed to the prime minister to advise Datuk Seri Megat as this matter was common knowledge," he said.

However, he said, no action was taken against the minister.

Anwar said he raised the matter with the prime minister when he was asked to announce the names of two new full ministers including Megat Junid, when he was acting as prime minister.

When revealing Abdul Aziz's name, Anwar said that he discussed Abdul Aziz's role in the conspiracy to topple him with the prime minister after being informed by then police Special Branch Director Datuk Mohamed Said Awang.

"Datuk Mohamed Said told me that Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin was involved in seeking the cooperation of two men by the name of Taib Salamon and B.K.Tan to defame me and Datuk Aziz was also not happy with me for not approving a big contract for his son with Angkasapuri," he said.

Anwar said that in the case of Abdul Aziz, the prime minister was more positive.

He said that on Aug 31, 1997, after the National Day parade at the Merdeka Square, he was asked by Dr Mahathir to meet him at Seri Perdana where he (Anwar) was informed that he had also heard about Abdul Aziz's involvement.

"He told me that he will speak with Aziz over the matter," he said.

He said that Abdul Aziz had explained the matter and apologised, promising not to be involved anymore.

Anwar began his testimony by informing the court that he was removed as deputy prime minister and finance minister on Sept 2, last year, before relating the positions he held in the Cabinet from 1983 to 1993 when he was appointed to the second highest post in the government.

He said that he had discussed the conspiracy theory with Dr Mahathir as early as 1997, when he was acting as prime minister.

"The discussion on conspiracy began as early as 1997, when acting in the capacity as prime minister and some of the ministers and party leaders were clearly unhappy with my stand on corruption, power abuse and wastage on mega projects," he said.

He said that the matter had also been discussed with Mohtar and then ACA Director-General Datuk Shafie Yahya.

Anwar said that the discussion with the prime minister was on the existence of undercurrents among the people who had largely been questioning the practice of corruption in the government.

"I feel responsible as a loyal deputy prime minister to convey such information to the prime minister, especially after the ACA director-general and the honourable attorney-general had informed me of the difficulty in instituting action due to the disagreement of the prime minister," he said.

Anwar said that Mohamed Said also confirmed the people's dissatisfaction and criticisms which were heightening then and that he was also facing problems in conveying them to the prime minister.

He said that the first corruption case he had referred to the prime minister was that involving Rafidah.

At this juncture, Justice Datuk Arifin Jaka ticked off Fernando for bringing up the minister's name but he allowed it after it was explained to him that it was to prove the defence of conspiracy.

-- BERNAMA

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