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Court-Anwar (Book)

BOOK ON ANWAR DISTRIBUTED BY OFFICERS FROM PM'S DEPARTMENT, COURT TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told the High Court here today that he was shocked to discover that a book listing 50 reasons why he could not become the prime minister had been distributed by several officers from the Prime Minister's Department.

He was informed of the matter by Norazman Abdullah alias Baginda, assistant to Datuk Sng Chee Hua, an MP from Sarawak.

He said Baginda told him that besides being distributed at the Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre last year, the book, entitled "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM" had also received repeated orders from the Prime Minister's department.

Anwar said this under examination by his leading Christopher Fernando when making his defence at his sodomy trial which entered its 70th day today.

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

Sukma, a businessman, is also charged with abetting Anwar to sodomise Azizan at the same place and time.

Anwar said Baginda also told him that Tun Daim Zainuddin, now First Finance Minister, helped with the finances and had obtained a contract for Umami Hafilda Ali and Azizan as rewards for their roles in a conspiracy to topple Anwar.

He said Baginda told him that Umami had admitted receiving RM2.5 million as well as the project for her role in the conspiracy.

Umami is the author of a letter, "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri" (The Matter of the Deputy Prime Minister's Misconduct) dated Aug 5, 1997, which was sent to the prime minister together with a sworn statement by Azizan that Anwar had sodomised him.

Anwar said Baginda told him that Umami had also planned with Khalid Jafri, the book's author, to include the allegations of his sexual misconduct and sodomy in the book together with other allegations.

Baginda told him as early as July last year about the prime minister's decision to sack him and also Umami's undertaking to help "finish me off", he said.

Anwar said Baginda's report also implicated the prime minister's political secretary, Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin and Umno executive secretary Umno Tengku Adnan Mansor in the conspiracy.

He said: "Because the prime minister believed that Anwar would challenge him in the Umno general assembly in 1999, he (Daim) would ensure that Anwar would be dropped before that.

"Various ploys came up including allegations of my being a CIA agent, corruption, complicity in murder and sexual misconduct but according to him (Daim), the best way to make the people, especially the Muslims, angry with me was to fabricate the sodomy story."

He said Baginda also told him that Umami had telephoned her close friend, Khairuddin Abu Hassan, who was responsible for distributing the book at the Umno general assembly, to continue circulating it despite an injunction he had obtained "because the prime minister's office was still ordering the book."

According to Baginda, Umami had invoked the prime minister's and Daim's

names when giving Azizan an assurance that he would be protected, he said, adding that Ummi has also insisted that Azizan stick to his story.

Fernando then asked whether Baginda had informed Anwar about the prime minister's attitude towards him after the allegations that he would be challenging Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad but senior deputy public prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail objected saying that the question should be put to Baginda or the prime minister.

Justice Arifin Jaka at first ruled that the question was not necessary but allowed it after Fernando said that it was necessary to show that the relationship between the two had deteriorated after allegations that Anwar would be challenging the prime minister.

Anwar said his relationship with Dr Mahathir became more tense because of the involvement of other people who instigated the latter.

Arifin again stressed that if Fernando wanted to put up a defence of conspiracy, he must link it to the sodomy charge and counsel told the court that he would be calling Baginda.

Anwar said the conspirators had succeeded in convincing the prime minister that he would challenge him in the 1999 Umno general assembly.

Besides that, the decisions he took in political issues, tackling the economic slowdown, company bailouts and corruption clearly contradicted the prime minister's stand, he said on the decline in their relationship before his sacking.

He said Baginda told him that after convincing the prime minister that Anwar would be challenging him, Daim proceeded with his plan on the sodomy charge.

Anwar said he remembered Baginda's report to him on the matter because Baginda had recorded part of his conversation with Ummi when they were in London.

Baginda had given him the tape but he returned it to Baginda to blank out parts of the recording which criticised the prime minister.

At this juncture, Arifin praised Anwar for doing so, saying: "My impression is that you still respect the old man (pm)" and Anwar, smiling said: "Yes, my Lord."

The tape has yet to be tendered as an exhibit.

-- BERNAMA

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