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Court-Anwar (Businessman)

BUSINESSMAN: ANWAR WANTED TO SEE HANIFF OVER SOME PERSONAL MATTERS

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- A businessman who arranged for the meeting between Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Tun Haniff Omar told the High Court hearing Anwar's sodomy trial here today that Anwar had wanted to see the former inspector-general of police over some "personal" matters.

Datuk Andrew Leong, 44, said the meeting was held at the former deputy prime minister's official residence in Damansara one morning in October 1993 after the subuh prayer time.

He said the meeting between Anwar and Haniff was held in a study room in Anwar's house for about 10 to 15 minutes but he did not know what it was about.

Andrew, who was present in Anwar's house that morning, said he did not know what transpired at the meeting as he was asked by Haniff to wait in the hall.

Anwar, 51, who is also former finance minister, is charged with sodomising his wife's former driver, Azizan Abu Bakar, at no. 10-7-2, Tivoli Villa, Jalan Medang Tandung, Bangsar here at about 7.45pm between January and March, 1993.

His adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, 38, is jointly tried with him on the same charge. Sukma faces another charge of abetting Anwar to commit the offence at the same time and place.

Leong, the prosecution's fourth witness, said he arrived at Anwar's residence about two minutes before Haniff.

When Haniff arrived, Anwar was still on the upper floor of his house.

"He came down a few minutes later, greeted Tun before they proceeded to the study room. Tun asked me to stay in the hall and after 10 to 15 minutes they came out of the room and Anwar asked me to join them for breakfast," he said.

After that, he and Haniff left.

Asked how his relationship with Anwar came about, Leong said he knew Anwar "casually" since the 1980s when Anwar was the Umno Youth leader holding a deputy minister's post.

Leong said he had known Haniff for the past 17 years as they were both members of the Sri Aman badminton team.

When asked by senior deputy public prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail to point to Anwar in the court, the witness pointed his thumb towards the dock, smiled and said: "He is the dock".

Smiling, Anwar put up his right hand and pointed his finger at Sukma, who was seated next to him, before turning to the public gallery and giving a wide grin to his family members.

Cross-examined by Anwar's leading counsel, Christopher Fernando, Leong admitted that he was a friend of Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob (Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister).

Asked where he normally went with him, he said: "We play golf together."

Fernando : Do you play poker with him?

Leong: No.

Fernando: Do you gamble with him?

Leong: "No"

Fernando: Are you sure about it? You take him gambling?

Leong: Sometimes...in golf, we do gamble.

Fernando: What do you mean by gambling at golf course?

Leong: (Over) who should pay for dinner. Normally the loser would pay.

At this juncture, Gani objected to Fernando's line of questioning, stressing that Megat Junid had nothing to do with the case.

Asked by Justice Datuk Arifin Jaka what he wanted to establish from the witness, the defence counsel said he wanted to attack Leong's credibility.

"But his relationship has nothing to do with credibility," the judge remarked.

Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah stood up to object and said that the defence could not ask the witness about someone who would not even be called to testify.

"You don't have to answer that," said Arifin to Leong.

"My Lordship said I don't have to answer that," Leong said, looking at Fernando.

When asked whether he knew the prime minister, the witness said he knew Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as the prime minister but did not know him socially.

He said he had met Dr Mahathir at his office and had also occasionally met the prime minister at his residence.

Asked with whom he went to see Dr Mahathir in his residence, Leong said he sometimes went alone and sometimes brought foreign visitors along.

Mohtar again objected, contending that the question was not relevant to the case.

"It is relevant. His relationship with the prime minister is relevant. It's very important and has an important bearing to this trial, please give us some latitude. Datuk Seri Anwar is charged with a serious charge here," Fernando said.

When asked by the judge to say in what way the question was relevant, Fernando refused and said that he would not do so until the witness was sent out.

"This question is pertinent to show that there's 'bad blood' between the prime minister and Datuk Seri Anwar. I will establish that there is," Fernando said.

However, when he refused to budge, Arifin ordered him to ask his next question of the witness.

Asked about his relationship with the Genting Group, Leong said he and the group's managing director, who is also the son of Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong, the group executive chairman, were members of the Sri Aman Badminton Club.

Businesswise, he said, he was the supplier of manufacturing equipment to one of the group's subsidiaries which is actively involved in palm oil refinery.

Asked whether he also did PR (public relations) work for the group, Leong said he did not, but "as a businessman, I have to help them in any way I can."

-- BERNAMA

RA JK