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Inquiry-Submissions

COMMISSION TO HEAR SUBMISSIONS TOMORROW

KUALA LUMPUR, March 3 (Bernama) -- The Royal Commission of Inquiry investigating the injuries sustained by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim while in police custody will hear submissions from various parties involved in the inquiry tomorrow.

Former Chief Justice of Malaya Tan Sri Anuar Zainal Abidin, who heads the three-member panel, decided on this after counsel representing various individuals as well as former Attorney-General Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman, who is assisting the inquiry, said they wanted to make submissions.

The other members of the commission are former Court of Appeal Judge Datuk Mahadev Shankar and orthopaedic surgeon Datuk Dr Yeoh Poh Hong.

The setting up of the commission was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last January following calls by various people that Anwar's injuries be fully investigated by an independent body.

The Terms of Reference of the inquiry are to investigate and examine the injuries sustained by Anwar with the objective of establishing the reasons for the injuries and ascertaining the person or persons responsible or who conspired to cause the injuries.

It will then report to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong the appropriate action that should be taken against the officer or officers responsible for the injuries suffered Anwar.

Anwar, who was removed as deputy prime minister and finance minister on Sept 2 last year and was arrested two weeks later for allegedly leading an unlawful assembly, appeared in court on Sept 29 with a black left eye.

He alleged that he had been beaten unconscious while in police custody.

Earlier, the panel disallowed an application by Anwar's counsel Karpal Singh to call three witnesses in addition to the 21 witnesses called by Abu Talib.

This came about after Abu Talib informed the inquiry that he had adduced sufficient evidence for the commission, particularly the admission by former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor, to enable the panel to make a decision and forward it to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Karpal said he proposed to call SAC II Mat Zain Ibrahim, who headed a special police team that investigated Anwar's injuries, Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail, and Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah.

He said it was necessary to call Mat Zain as he had submitted a report to Mohtar pertaining to his investigations, while Mohtar could shed light on the action he took after receiving the report.

He also said evidence adduced in the trial showed that Abdul Gani was at the Bukit Aman police headquarters on the night of Anwar's arrest.

When Anuar asked Karpal if he was saying that the number of witnesses called was not enough, Karpal said there might be an attempt of cover-up by Rahim himself.

Abu Talib, in urging the inquiry to dismiss the application, said the inquiry should not lose sight of its term of reference to identify the person or persons responsible for causing the injuries sustained by Anwar.

He said it was very mischievous on the part of Karpal to ask for the three to be witnesses because, in his opinion, their presence would not in any way assist the commission in fulfilling its terms of reference.

At the outset of today's proceedings, a handkerchief that was used to blindfold Anwar after his arrest on Sept 20 was tendered as an exhibit.

The 21st witness, ASP Mohd Rodwan Mohd Yusoff, 41, of Bukit Aman's CID Prosecution/Legal Division, said he had handed over the handkerchief to Mat Zain when the latter was investigating Anwar's injuries.

The handkerchief still had some blood stains and was handed over without being washed or cleaned, he said.

When asked to show how the handkerchief was used to blindfold Anwar, he said it was made into several folds and tied round Anwar's eyes with the edges of the handkerchief on Anwar's lips.

Earlier, Mohd Rodwan said he was at the lock-up counter of Bukit Aman on the night in question and he saw Anwar being taken into the lock-up blindfolded but not handcuffed.

He said after that he saw Rahim and CID Director Datuk Yaacob Mohd Amin entering the lock-up area, and Rahim making signals by placing a finger on his lips, closing his eyes with his hands and indicating handcuffing.

He was not sure whom the signals were directed at, and while the two senior police officers were walking towards the cell he noticed Roslan Kassim (former Negeri Sembilan Umno Youth chief) stretching his head forward from the direction of his cell to find out what was going on.

He said that shortly after that he saw Yaakob pulling Rahim from behind and out of the lock-up entrance, and the two then left the area.

When asked whether he had heard any voice crying out in pain, Mohd Rodwan said "no" because at that time his attention was focused on asking Roslan and several Indonesian immigrants who were under detention to enter their respective cells.

Mohd Rodwan said CID Deputy Director Datuk Ramli Yusof then came and asked him to go and get medicine, and on entering the cell he saw Anwar sitting on a cement slab blindfolded and handcuffed from behind.

Mohd Rodwan said that after a while he got hold of "minyak gamat" (a type of medicated oil), and on returning to the cell to apply the oil on Anwar he saw another policeman applying hot compression on the swelling on Anwar's forehead.

Earlier, Brickfields senior investigating officer ASP Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid, 31, said he heard a voice crying out in pain "aduh, aduh" (ouch, ouch) and "janganlah pukul saya" (please do not hit me) coming from the direction of the cell after Rahim and Yaacob had entered it.

He was then at the lock-up counter area and after Rahim and Yaacob had left the lock-up, Ramli told him that Rahim had hit Anwar in the lock-up.

"While shaking his head, Datuk Ramli said we are finished, Tan Sri IGP has beaten Datuk Seri Anwar. Fortunately, I restrained Tan Sri Rahim from hitting Datuk Seri Anwar further, otherwise, Datuk Seri Anwar would have got a worse beating," he quoted Ramli as saying.

Abdul Aziz said Ramli did not tell him why Rahim assaulted Anwar.

The inquiry continues tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

ROS YBY