

14/01/1999

Defence plans to call Ministers as witness

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's lawyers today told the court that they intend to call Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a witness, if Anwar is ordered to enter his defence.

Christopher Fernando said the defence also wanted to call Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob.

Fernando said this after leading prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail offered 47 of his witnesses after closing his case, and asked the defence to list those it intended to call.

Rafidah is not on the list, but was named after Abdul Gani offered to assist the defence in getting witnesses to attend court.

Fernando said the defence also wanted to call former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor, the Prime Minister's political secretary Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin and former Criminal Investigation Department director Datuk Ismail Che Rus.

It also wanted to call Khalid Jafri and Khairuddin Hassan, respectively the author and publisher of the book 50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Ibrahim Tidak Boleh Jadi Perdana Menteri (50 Reasons why Anwar Ibrahim cannot become Prime Minister).

Other potential witnesses are Abdul Rahim Dahalan (Rahim King) and Ma'amin Latip. Azizan Abu Bakar had described them as Anwar's people who allegedly forced him to retract his allegation that Anwar had sodomised him.

Fernando also named several siblings of Ummi Hafilda Ali, who had accused Anwar of having an affair with her sister-in-law Shamsidar Taharin. They are Shamsidar's husband Mohamed Azmin (Anwar's former private secretary), Mohd Azman and Norlia. Shamsidar is also a potential witness.

The defence also said it might call Datuk Sng Chee Hua, a politician-businessman whose purported conversation with Ummi had been secretly recorded. The defence claimed the conversation showed a conspiracy against Anwar.

Others named were Dr Ristina Majid (in whose house Ummi and Azizan were arrested), Norzilah Jalil (Megat Junid's second wife), Normala Mohamad Yusof, Mohd Taib Salamon, Tan Beng Kim, Zamrah Lajis (Ummi's business partner) and Zull Aznam Haron (Anwar's former ADC).

The prosecution's original witness list contained 52 names. Witnesses who have been called were not offered to the defence. The prosecution also called a number of witnesses who were not on its list.

(END)