

02 AUG 1999

Court-Chandra

HIGH COURT ORDERS DR CHANDRA MUZAFFAR TO SHOW CAUSE

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 2 (Bernama) -- The High Court here today ordered Dr Chandra Muzaffar, the deputy president of the National Justice Party (Keadilan), to show cause as to why he should not be charged with contempt of court in relation to his statement made to the media a few days ago.

Justice Datuk Ariffin Jaka ruled that Chandra's statement was a clear reference to the on-going sodomy trial of former Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"Its not right for him to pass comments in relation to the on-going case," Justice Ariffin said.

The statement issued to the media which appeared in Harakah, the official PAS organ, today, among others quoted Chandra as saying that it was saddening that the police, prosecutors (officers of the court) and the local media had allowed themselves to be used by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

His statement was in relation to the publication of the confession by Anwar's adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, a boutique owner, who is jointly tried with Anwar, that he was sodomised by Anwar, last Wednesday.

In view of this, Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah today made an application for the court to order a notice be issued against him to show cause as to why he should not be charged with contempt of court.

Chandra is given two weeks from today to explain. He is ordred to appear in court on Aug 16.

Justice Arifin said that Chandra, in his statement, had made direct reference to Sukma's confession, on which admissibility had been decided by the court.

"On the face of the last paragraph (of his statement), it appears that the author is passing a serious aspersion directly on the integrity of the court," he said.

Earlier, Mohtar, stressing that contempt of court was a "heinous thing to do", urged the defence to join him in the prosecution's condemnation of the act.

He said contempt cases were clear cases which warranted an immediate action.

Anwar's leading counsel, Christopher Fernando, in objecting to the application to cite Chandra for contempt, said that the court needed to carefully study the matter before making any order.

He said that the court had yet to confirm whether Chandra was the real author of the statement.

The order should not be granted as no proper application was filed by the prosecution, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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