

22 OCT 1999

Court-Anwar (Daim)

I DID NOT EXPECT SUCH DRASTIC ACTION, SAYS ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told the High Court here that he did not think his tense relationship with the prime minister could lead to drastic action being taken against him.

Anwar said that he was informed by First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin that he would be immediately charged in court on various charges including corruption and sexual misconduct.

"Even though I had expected problems to arise due to my tense relationship with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the prime minister, I did not think it was possible for them to take such drastic action," he said.

He was testifying in his defence on a charge of sodomising Azizan Abu Bakar, his wife's former driver. He began his testimony today, the 62nd day of his sodomy trial.

He was sacked as deputy prime minister and finance minister on Sept 2, last year, over allegations of sexual misconduct.

Anwar, 52, is jointly tried with his adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, 38, on separate charges of sodomising Azizan, 39, at Sukma's apartment in di Tivoli Villa, Bangsar, here, one night at 7,45, between January and March, 1993.

Sukma, a businessman, faces another charge of abetting Anwar in the commission of the offence, at the same time and place.

Earlier, when asked to remember the relevant events until his dismissal, Anwar said that it began with Daim telling him on Aug 12, last year, that he would be charged in court.

Anwar said that he needed to refer to his diary to check the dates. The diary however could not be produced as it is in the possession of the police.

Anwar's leading counsel, Christopher Fernando, said that notice on the matter was served on the prosecution yesterday.

However, Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail told the court that the prosecution only received the notice this morning.

Justice Datuk Arifin Jaka said that the matter should be dealt with to facilitate the smooth-running of the trial.

Anwar said that he remember that day to be a Wednesday with Daim telling him before the Cabinet meeting that Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah had had discussions over action to be taken against him.

He said that Mohtar had told Daim that he (Anwar) would be immediately charged and Daim followed it up with him, asking him to resign to avoid "undue embarrassment to me and my family".

Anwar said he expressed great shock to Daim over Mohtar's action in choosing to discuss the matter with him (Daim).

He had then told Daim that "I don't accept threats", before proceeding to the Prime Minister's office.

"I informed the prime minister what was told to me by Tun Daim and I protested because Tun Daim does not have the right or role or duty to exert power or give orders to the attorney-general," he said.

Anwar said that Dr Mahathir telephoned Mohtar and he overheard, among others, the prime minister allowing the attorney-general to proceed with the prosecution of Datuk S. Nallakaruppan (Anwar's tennis partner) and Khalid Jafri, the writer of the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM" (50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Become PM).

He also heard Dr Mahathir saying "wait for my further instructions on

Datuk Seri Anwar".

The Cabinet meeting, he said, was delayed until 10am as he sought Dr Mahathir's explanation the reasons for him being charged, on corruption and sexual misconduct, Official Secrets Act and possibly treason, based on the information given to him by Daim.

However, he said, the prime minister did not offer any explanation.

"When the prime minister put down the phone, I told him that just because I have different views on several issues including big corruption cases involving leaders including the bail out of the businesses of his son, Mirzan Mahathir, and others, he should not resort to fabricate charges and conspired against me," he said.

Anwar said he and Dr Mahathir discussed the conspiracy issue for weeks before the incident and there were heated discussions between them daily, between 8.10 to 8.15am and 8.45 to 9am.

The trial was adjourned to Monday even though the court earlier fixed tomorrow for Anwar to continue with his evidence.

The court was told that Anwar was required to undergo further examination at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Hospital (HUKM) tomorrow.

Anwar said that the medical examination was scheduled for this Wednesday but the prison authorities had requested for it to be done over the weekend so as not to disrupt the hearing.

Today's proceeding was adjourned at noon to enable Anwar to perform Friday prayers at the Sungai Buloh Prison.

Anwar is serving a six-year jail term for corruption at the prison.

"Sometimes I wish I could perform my prayer at Masjid Negara," said Anwar, drawing laughter from the public gallery.

-- BERNAMA

NHD/SBB RM