

09 NOV 1999

Court-Anwar

I WAS INSTRUCTED TO USE PUBLIC FUND TO COMPENSATE COMPANY, SAYS ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told the High Court here today that he was instructed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to use the Treasury fund to compensate a company without going through proper procedure.

Anwar, the former deputy prime minister and finance minister, making his defence on a sodomy charge, said he had refused to follow the instruction as it was not part of his job as finance minister.

"That is not part of the duty of the Minister of Finance to plunder public fund. I'm referring specifically to Tan Sri Ting (Pek Khiing) and Ekran (Berhad)," he said.

Ting was the major shareholder of Ekran Berhad, the main contractor of the RM13.6 billion Bakun hydro electric project (BHEP) in Sarawak.

Anwar was testifying when questioned by his leading counsel, Christopher Fernando, on the 11th day of his defence, at his sodomy trial which entered its 74th day today.

Anwar, 52, is jointly tried with his adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, 38, on separate charge of sodomising Azizan Abu Bakar, 39, in Sukma's apartment in Tivoli Villa, Bangsar, here, one night at 7.45 between January and March, 1993.

Sukma, a businessman, faces another charge of abetting Anwar in sodomising Azizan, Anwar's wife former driver, at the same time and place.

He was sacked as deputy prime minister and finance minister on Sept 2, last year on moral grounds.

Anwar, who was ordered by the court last Friday to be treated immediately at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital (HKL) after he frequently complained of "splitting headache", today appeared in court without complaining of headache throughout the trial.

He spent three days in the hospital.

In his evidence, Anwar said the official Treasury view was that it must be properly audited and accounted.

"When I refused, it was seen as a challenge to the prime minister," Anwar said.

He said he also opposed Dr Mahathir's instruction on one of Renong Berhad's project and the prime minister was furious over his opposition to the proposals of the two projects.

Anwar said the Bakun project was unique because besides Ting, First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin also had interest through nominees in Ekran and the prime minister's son, was supposed to get a major contract of the project.

During Anwar's testimony, Justice Datuk Arifin Jaka reminded Fernando not to repeat his questions and to keep his line of questioning relevant to the charges before the court.

Fernando replied that the defence wanted to establish there was bad blood between Anwar and Dr Mahathir and this then was "culminating to the sanction of the charges preferred against Anwar which had been investigated before and found to be baseless."

Justice Arifin wanted the defence to adduce the evidence to show that there was bad blood between Anwar and the prime minister and Fernando said they wanted to prove that the second investigation was prompted because of bad blood and the deterioration in relationship between the two.

After that, an argument broke between the judge and counsel which ended

when Justice Arifin said he would record everything Fernando said.

Anwar continued his testimony and said the high-ranking individuals who would be badly affected if the compensation scheme was not implemented were Ting, Daim, Tan Sri Taib Mahmud's children and the prime minister's son.

Anwar then recounted the various disputes between him and the prime minister, which resulted in Dr Mahathir's change of attitude towards him last year.

Anwar said Daim had convinced Dr Mahathir that he would challenge the prime minister as the Umno president and there were major policy differences in the manner they both dealt with the economic crisis and financial convulsions.

"I think what prompted PM to instruct relevant authorities to act against me is because I am no longer seen to be reliable to protect the interest of his family and cronies," he said.

Anwar said he knew that Daim was responsible in insinuating to Dr Mahathir to remove him from his various cabinet posts in order to protect his business empire and continue to cover up gross abuses including corruption by bringing in the interest of his children and close associates.

"My Lord, by then I myself was convinced that they were both jointly having a major interest in the business and contracts that I have mentioned," he said.

He said a major conflict of interest between the two of them (Anwar and Dr Mahathir) arose when the prime minister was very angry with him after the Anti Corruption Agency found RM100,000 in the drawer of the director-general of the Economic Planning Unit in August last year.

"The prime minister accused me of conniving with the ACA and he shouted at me and said 'you mean my office or my house next'. My Lord, he was scared," Anwar said.

Asked whether he knew why Dr Mahathir was scared, Anwar said it was because the investigation was on the privatisation units where all the decisions were made by Dr Mahathir.

Anwar said the prime minister was also not satisfied with him after he tabled the Bill for the new Corruption Act which had been passed by Parliament in 1997.

He said at that time, Dr Mahathir was not in the country and certain provisions in the Bill were vehemently opposed by Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob and Daim.

To another question, Anwar informed the court that Azizan was not afraid of him as his wife's former driver claimed to be because Azizan and his family continued to visit his house from 1993 until last year.

Hearing continues.

-- BERNAMA
NHD SBB RM