

27 OCT 1999

Court-Anwar (Rafidah)

RAFIDAH HAS PITTED ME AGAINST PM, SAYS ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 27 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told the High Court here today that International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz had pitted him against the prime minister.

Rafidah did this through her words and letters, the former deputy prime minister said.

"I say this because to me, Rafidah, either orally or in writing, criticised and attacked the prime minister for being surrounded by crooks and being obsessed with mega projects but in front of the prime minister, she attacked me," he said.

Asked whether he knew what Rafidah's motive was, he said Rafidah wanted to save herself from corruption charges.

"She knew that she would face corruption charges, so the way to save herself was to show that she was on the prime minister's side as well as mine," he said in reply to his leading counsel, Christopher Fernando, on the fourth day of his defence in his sodomy trial which entered its 66th day today.

Anwar, 52, and his adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, 38, are being jointly tried for sodomising Azizan Abu Bakar, 39, the former driver of Anwar's wife, at Sukma's apartment in Tivoli Villa, Bangsar, here, one night at 7.45 between January and March, 1993.

Sukma, a businessman, is also charged with abetting Anwar to sodomise Azizan at the same place and time.

Earlier, the court was told that the attorney-general had proposed five corruption charges against Rafidah and that Anwar himself had informed Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad about this.

Anwar said Rafidah met him after she learnt that he had informed the prime minister of the proposed charges.

"She also knew about the initiative by Datuk Seri Megat Junid (Megat Ayob) to have the penalty against her for the charges reduced," he said.

He said that at the meeting, he rapped Rafidah, telling her that as a senior minister she knew that they could not make a pact with the attorney-general or influence the judge as stated in Megat Junid's letter.

Anwar told the court yesterday that Megat Junid, who was then deputy home minister, had sent a letter to the prime minister with a copy to him.

Megat Junid, who is now Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, was one of the four people named by Anwar as "master conspirators" in his defence of a conspiracy to topple him.

He had claimed that they acted so after he complained to Dr Mahathir of their alleged misconduct and that Rafidah was also involved in the conspiracy.

Anwar said that at the meeting, Rafidah scolded him for reporting the matter to Dr Mahathir but he told her that the report was nothing new as the prime minister already knew about the matter.

"I was only discharging my responsibility. Moreover, at that time, I was chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Government Management and Strengthening. Very unpopular job, My Lord," he said, smiling.

Anwar said that after the meeting, Rafidah sent him a letter criticising and attacking the prime minister.

"When she wants to criticise PM, she writes to me. When she goes to PM, she accuses me," he said.

He added that although Rafidah had tried to prove that she was his

loyal supporter, and he probably believed her at that time, the events after that showed otherwise.

"I was not a smart politician," he added, smiling.

Anwar said Rafidah, in her letter to him, had said: "PM seems to be surrounded by crooks and Tun Daim (Zainuddin) seems to want everything ... PM had better shape up on his judgment of people before his good name becomes irrevocably marred ... and we are much too involved in glamour projects".

Rafidah's letter was in reply to his letter querying, among other things, the status of a company, Gunawan Steel, which had to be clarified to the prime minister.

Anwar said Rafidah also expressed her dissatisfaction with Tun Daim, the First Finance Minister, who she claimed to have taken too many privatised projects, land and shares but was still main adviser to the prime minister.

Rafidah had also stated: "I am frankly sick and tired of insinuations by people. If Daim wants to be a steel giant, let him be. But don't plant insinuations in PM's head", said Anwar who read out the letter after it was admitted as an exhibit.

On another matter, Anwar said the Special Branch investigated the matter after his aide de camp, ASP Zull Aznam Haron, lodged a police report on a poison pen letter entitled "Talqin Terbuka Untuk Anwar Ibrahim" (Last Rites for Anwar Ibrahim) on Aug 15, 1997, which contained allegations of his sexual misconduct.

Special Branch Director Datuk Mohamed Said Awang later informed him that the investigation revealed that there was a political conspiracy against him involving politicians like Datuk Aziz Samsuddin (Dr Mahathir's political secretary), Daim, Megat Junid and Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik (former Melaka chief minister), he said.

Anwar said Mohamed Said told him that the report on the matter had been submitted to Dr Mahathir, who later told a media conference that there was an attempt to topple Anwar as his deputy and that the allegations of sexual misconduct were defamatory and baseless.

Dr Mahathir also told the reporters that those who made the allegations "deserved to be shot", Anwar said, adding: "but in the end I was shot."

At his juncture, Fernando told the court that the defence would be calling the reporters who covered the event as witnesses.

The hearing was adjourned to tomorrow because Anwar had to undergo a medical examination at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital at 2.15pm.

-- BERNAMA

SBB NHD JK