

08 MAR 1999

Court-Anwar (Ummi)

UMMI KEEPS PHOTO OF ANWAR ON PILLOW, SAYS AZMIN

KUALA LUMPUR, March 8 (Bernama) -- Ummi Hafilda Ali, the writer of the letter "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri" (The Matter of the Misconduct of the Deputy Prime Minister) kept the photograph of herself with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on the pillow in her bedroom, The High Court was told today.

Mohd Azmin Ali, Ummi's brother, said he had seen his sister keep the photograph which he had taken during the 1995 Umno general assembly.

"Ummi had repeatedly asked to be photographed together with saudara Anwar and she said that time (the assembly) was the best opportunity to take the photograph with saudara Anwar," he said explaining how the photograph was taken.

The letter "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri" was dated Aug 5, 1997 which was addressed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad together with a special report and a statutory declaration by Azizan Abu Bakar, former driver of Anwar's wife.

Azmin was giving evidence at the corruption trial of Anwar, 51, who faces four counts of corrupt practice for allegedly abusing his position as Deputy Prime minister and Finance Minister to interfere with the police investigation into the allegation of sexual misconduct against him, to avoid embarrassment.

Anwar is charged under Section 2 (1) of Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance No. 22, 1970 which carries a maximum sentence of 14 years imprisonment or RM20,000 fine or both upon conviction.

The trial which entered its 67th day was heard before Justice Datuk S. Augustine Paul.

Azmin, the 14th defence witness, said the photograph which also showed his wife, Shamsidar Taharin, was taken using his camera.

Earlier, when counsel Christopher Fernando asked the court to show the photograph which had been accepted as evidence to Azmin, Paul said the photograph needed no explanation but Fernando said it was necessary to clarify the issue on the photograph.

Fernando: Do you recognize this photograph?

Azmin: Yes, Yang Arif. I was the photographer.

Azmin said he had given the photograph to Ummi and "I myself had seen her keep the photograph on the pillow in her bedroom".

His reply brought laughter from those in court.

Explaining to the court, Fernando said the matter was public knowledge and in fact Ummi had surrendered the photograph which she kept in her handbag to the police herself.

Azmin, who was giving evidence during examination-in-chief, said he had met several members of his family on June 26, 1998 after seeing the letter on the matter of the misconduct written by Ummi.

He said he had told them of the problem caused by the letter and Ummi had requested to see his wife to seek forgiveness.

Azmin said Ummi had asked to see him privately through a businessman who is also a politician, Datuk Sng Chee Hwa.

He said they met at a guest room at Sng's office at Wisma Genesis at Jalan Sultan Ismail.

Azmin later told the court about his discussion with Ummi but Paul did not allow the statement to be released by the media and the issue would be submitted by both parties tomorrow.

Hearing continues tomorrow at 9am.

-- BERNAMA

NHD AHH AO