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Anwar was in Thailand, says former ambassador

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Former Malaysian Ambassador to Thailand told the High Court today that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was in Thailand from Feb 21 to 23, 1993.

Datuk Zainal Abidin Alias said Anwar attended a forum "Towards One South East Asia in the 21st Century" which was held at Bangkok's Hyatt Erawan Hotel on Feb 22, 1993.

Anwar and his adopted brother, businessman Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, are charged with sodomising former driver Azizan Abu Bakar at a Tivoli Villa apartment in Bangsar between January and March 1993.

Sukma is also facing a second charge of abetting Anwar in sodomising Azizan at the same time and place. Azizan is the former driver of Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

To a question by Anwar's leading counsel Christopher Fernando, Zainal said Anwar attended a dinner reception held by the head of a non-governmental organisation Sukhumbhand Paribatra on Feb 22. (Paribatra is now Thailand's Deputy Foreign Minister).

After this, Fernando told the court that Karpal Singh, one of Anwar's lawyers, was in the Shah Alam High Court for an election petition and would be coming later in the day.

Judge Datuk Arifin Jaka then told Sukma's counsel Gobind Singh Deo to check whether Karpal would be coming and granted a short adjournment.

Parties were supposed to continue submissions on the relevance of the proposed evidence of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the trial.

However, during the adjournment Deputy Registrar Rozilah Salleh announced that the trial was postponed to tomorrow with the consent of all parties.

Later, Fernando told reporters that the hearing was postponed as Karpal was engaged in the Shah Alam case while Senior DPP Datuk Abdul Gani Patail wanted to attend the Raja of Perlis Tuanku Syed Putra Syed Hassan's funeral.

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