

10/06/2000

Anwar's defence ordered to call witnesses

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The High Court today ordered the defence in Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy trial to instruct its witnesses to come to court on Monday.

Judge Datuk Arifin Jaka told the defence it had to decide on Monday whether it would adduce any evidence from the witnesses on whom subpoenas had been issued as early as April.

Arifin said he would dismiss the witnesses if the defence had no use for them since one of Anwar's counsel had said earlier that the witnesses would not be called if Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would not testify for the defence.

Lawyer S.N. Nair, Anwar's only counsel present today, said Anwar had told him that he needed time to discuss with his other counsel before deciding whether to call the witnesses.

Arifin said the defence had been given two days to decide on the matter (when the case was mentioned in chambers on Wednesday).

Today's proceedings lasted about 40 minutes during which commissioner for oath T.T. Singam, a defence witness, tendered one of the statutory declarations of Tan Sri Megat Junid Megat Ayob, former Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, made on April 4.

On Monday Singam will tender Megat Junid's other declaration made on March 27. He could not produce the document today because it was not with him.

Nair, who was conducting the examination-in-chief of Singam, said the declaration was with another counsel who was not in court.

Nair applied for an adjournment to Monday and undertook to produce the remaining witnesses.

They are Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin, Megat Junid and his wife Norzeilah Jalil.

The defence had obtained a subpoena against Dr Mahathir, but it was later cancelled by Arifin who ruled that the Prime Minister's evidence was not relevant.

The defence then appealed against Arifin's decision to the Court of Appeal which struck out the appeal without going into the merits and ordered hearing, which had been stayed pending the disposal of the appeal, to proceed.

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

Sukma is also facing a second charge on abetting Anwar in sodomising Azizan who is the former driver of Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

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