

21 JUNE 2000  
Court-Anwar  
DEFENCE CLOSES CASE IN ANWAR TRIAL

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- The defence in the sodomy trial of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, closed its case at the High Court, here, today.

One of Anwar's counsel, Sankaran Nair, told reporters that the defence had officially closed its case as there were no more witnesses to be called.

Meanwhile, both the defence and the prosecution in the trial were ordered to submit written submissions to the High Court by July 6.

The order, which was made in chambers by the trial judge, Datuk Arifin Jaka today, was announced by the High Court Deputy Registrar Rozilah Salleh.

However, the judgment date has yet to be fixed.

Anwar, 52, and Sukma, 39, were separately charged with sodomising Azizan Abu Bakar, 39, a former Anwar family driver, at 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 to sodomise Azizan, 39, at the same time and place.

Initially, Justice Arifin had fixed today to hear submissions from both parties after a 108-day trial, although Anwar's leading counsel, Christopher Fernando, had said that the defence was not ready to close its case as its appeal pertaining to testimony of the prime minister in the trial was pending at the Federal Court.

The Court of Appeal had upheld Justice Arifin's decision not to call Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to testify in the trial.

The defence had argued that Dr Mahathir's testimony was crucial to rebut Azizan's sodomy allegation.

The prosecution closed its case against Anwar and Sukma on the 46th day of the trial on Aug 20 last year after calling nine witnesses, including former Inspector-General of Police Tun Haniff Omar, while the defence had called 31 witnesses.

-- BERNAMA  
SBB JK