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Defence counsel to show mala fide in charge against Saidin

SHAH ALAM, Wed. - The corruption charge against Datuk Saidin Thamby was brought about by pressure on the Anti-Corruption Agency, the Sessions Court heard today.

Counsel Muhammad Shafee Abdullah said the defence would show why there was mala fide in the charge against the former Paya Jaras State Assemblyman.

He said this when explaining to judge Suraya Othman on the question he posed to witness Datuk Dr Abu Hanifah Noordin, who is a public accountant.

Counsel had asked Abu Hanifah whether his name had appeared in the "crony list" of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim revealed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Mohd Zaki Mohd Yasin had objected to the question.

Saidin, the former Selangor State Executive Council member, is charged with accepting RM1 million for helping Nusantara Network Sdn Bhd obtain a plot of State land.

He pleaded not guilty to receiving a cheque for that amount from Abu Hanifah at No 2, Jalan Selaseh 4, Taman Selaseh, Batu Caves, at midnight on March 15, 1997.

Saidin is alleged to have influenced the Selangor State Executive Council in approving the application for the land at Lot 4287 Section 4, Pekan Batu Caves, Gombak on Oct 4, 1995.

Muhammad Shafee said other than maintaining that no corruption was committed, the defence was contending that there was a 'hand' which manipulated political situations, including the Selayang Umno division.

"The way this was done as far as Selayang (division) was concerned was to frame the (corruption) charge against the accused," he said.

Muhammad Shafee said pressure was put on the ACA to bring about the charge, adding that people associated with the Prime Minister were being "eliminated".

Mohd Zaki replied that the issues raised by Muhammad Shafee were irrelevant, as the charge against Saidin was accepting the cheque.

To this Muhammad Shafee said he brought in the name of the former Deputy Prime Minister because there were two letters on Saidin which were sent to him (Anwar).

"I did not bring in the name for nothing," he said.

Suraya then told counsel to adduce only necessary evidence and not to involve other persons.

Muhammad Shafee then again asked Abu Hanifah if his name was on the crony list to which he (Abu Hanifah) replied it was, and added the list contained names of all people given shares by the International Trade and Industry Ministry.

Abu Hanifah, who was being cross-examined by Muhammad Shafee, said Saidin had asked for an additional RM1 million from him, three to four weeks prior to the Selayang Umno division elections in 1998.

Hearing continues.

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