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Judge in Anwar trial calls for submissions

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The High Court today ordered parties in Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy trial to make their submissions at the end of the defence case next Wednesday.

Judge Datuk Arifin Jaka said he deemed the defence was closed when Anwar's counsel Christopher Fernando said he had no other witnesses pending Anwar's appeal to the Federal Court.

The judge said his "hands are tied" and he could not stay the trial pending Anwar's appeal to the Federal Court against the Court of Appeal's decision dismissing his appeal against a High Court ruling not to call Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a defence witness.

However, Arifin said the defence could apply to adduce further evidence before Wednesday.

Earlier, Fernando told the court that the defence could not close its case pending the Federal Court's decision since the calling of further witnesses hinged on the appeal.

(The High Court had cancelled a subpoena obtained by the defence against Dr Mahathir.

(Later, the Court of Appeal dismissed Anwar's appeal against the decision and the matter is now pending hearing in the Federal Court.)

Anwar and his adopted brother businessman Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja are on trial for sodomising former driver Azizan Abu Bakar at Tivoli Villas 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.

When the court sat this morning it allowed the defence application to admit the statutory declarations of Anwar's former speech writer Dr Munawar Ahmad Anees and lawyer Manjeet Singh Dhillon which were filed in court earlier.

Manjeet had represented Munawar who was convicted by the Sessions Court on a charge of allowing Anwar to sodomise him.

Munawar has since filed an appeal which is pending in the High Court.

Cross-examined by Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Mohd Yusof Zainal Abiden, Manjeet said he had never met Senior DPP Datuk Abdul Gani Patail before October 1998.

(Manjeet had said yesterday that Abdul Gani called him to his office following his representation to the Attorney-General regarding the case of Datuk S. Nallakaruppan.

(Nallakaruppan, a former director of Magnum Corporation Bhd, was convicted and sentenced to 42 months' jail for a firearms offence but on appeal he was released after he had served 12 months and 10 days.)

Questioned by Mohd Yusof, Manjeet said before meeting Abdul Gani he did not know how much the senior DPP knew about Anwar's alleged involvement with women.

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