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Court-Anwar

PM EXPECTED TO TESTIFY IN ANWAR'S TRIAL ON THURSDAY

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 15 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to testify at the sodomy trial of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the High Court here on Thursday, a defence lawyer said today.

Gobind Singh Deo, counsel for Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja who is jointly on trial with Anwar, said the defence had informed the prosecution of this matter.

"I think he will be present that day because so far there has been no application to set aside the subpoena issued against him," he said when contacted.

However, Gobind said the Prime Minister's attendance would depend on the conduct of the case because the defence planned to finish with its witnesses' testimony first.

"We have to be fair to him; we are not going to ask the PM to wait outside the court for his turn to testify," he said.

Last October, Sukma applied to the court to issue a subpoena on the Prime Minister to appear as his defence witness.

Anwar, 52, and Sukma, 39, are making their defence on charges of sodomising Azizan Abu Bakar, 39, at the Tivoli Villa apartment in Jalan Medang Tanduk, Bukit Bandaraya in Bangsar here one night at 7.45 between January and March 1993.

Sukma, a businessman who is Anwar's adopted brother, is facing a second charge of abetting Anwar to sodomise Azizan, a former driver of Anwar's wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, at the same time and place.

Today's proceedings also saw four journalists, including from Bernama, giving evidence on press reports quoting Dr Mahathir and former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor in relation to allegations of sexual misconduct against Anwar.

Bernama reporter E. Sivabalan said he wrote an article on this after attending a press conference given by the Prime Minister on Aug 24, 1997.

He said all that was written was based on statements made by Dr Mahathir and that he had not misquoted the Prime Minister.

Utusan Malaysia's Siti Mariam Mohamed Zin, who attended the same press conference, also confirmed the statements she attributed to Dr Mahathir.

Asked on Abdul Rahim's statement dismissing the allegations against Anwar, New Straits Times journalist A. Kathiresan said it was made at a media conference held on Sept 3, 1997 at the Pulau Pinang contingent police headquarters.

Another Utusan Malaysia journalist, Yahya Ahmad, said he filed a report entitled "Penyebar Khabar Angin Patut Ditembak" (Rumour Mongers Should Be Shot) based on statements made by Dr Mahathir on Aug 30, 1997.

Earlier, Bandaraya Development Sdn Bhd property officer Tan Seng Kooi said that in January 1993 he inspected Sukma's apartment unit and found that the bathroom of the master bedroom was undergoing major renovation.

He said he did not notice any renovation being done to other portions of the apartment.

Hearing continues tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

SBB NHD YBY