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Sodomy trial of Anwar, Sukma to resume on March 22

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The sodomy trial of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his adopted brother Sukma Darmawantaat Madja will resume on March 22.

High Court judge Datuk Arifin Jaka fixed the date following an application by Anwar's leading counsel Christopher Fernando when the case was mentioned today. Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail did not object.

Fernando gave three reasons why the defence would be able to continue with its case only next week.

* An affidavit filed by Anwar showing the relevance of the proposed evidence by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had yet to be served on him (Dr Mahathir);

* Fernando and other members of Anwar's defence team were assisting leading counsel Raja Aziz Raja Addruse in an appeal by lawyer Zainur Zakaria in the Court of Appeal fixed for March 21.

(Zainur was sentenced to three months' jail by the High Court on Nov 30, 1998 after judge Datuk S. Augustine Paul found him in contempt for filing an affidavit on behalf of Anwar, who was then on trial on four counts of corrupt practice.

(Anwar had alleged in his affidavit that Abdul Gani and Senior DPP Datuk Azahar Mohamed had sought fabricated evidence against him).

* Anwar was also needed as a prosecution witness in the trial of former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor which begins tomorrow.

(Abdul Rahim is charged with attempting to cause grievous hurt to Anwar in Cell No 6 of the police lock-up in Bukit Aman at 10.45pm on Sept 20, 1998).

Fernando said these were the reasons why the defence was suggesting that the trial be resumed next Wednesday.

At this juncture, Arifin inquired from Fernando whether the defence could proceed with other witnesses first if the affidavit was not served on Dr Mahathir by then.

Fernando replied they preferred to deal with the affidavit first.

Otherwise it may disturb their sequence as they may not have to call Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin if Dr Mahathir testified.

To this, Arifin said Daim's name was not on the list of witnesses that the defence had applied to subpoena and he went on to read aloud the names.

Among them were former Attorney-General Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman, former Anti-Corruption Agency director-general Datuk Shafee Yahya and former Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob.

Anwar and Sukma are charged with sodomising Azizan Abu Bakar at 10-7-2, Tivoli Villa, Jalan Medang Tanduk, Bangsar, about 7.45pm between January and March 1993.

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

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