

Anwar ordered to pay RM85,000 to PM

SUN 18 APR 2001

Court awards costs for failed RM100m libel suit against Mahathir

By **N. Puspa Malar**
puspa@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was ordered today to pay Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad RM85,284.80 as costs for his failed RM100 million libel suit.

High Court deputy registrar Rozilah Salleh made the order in chambers this afternoon. Karpal Singh acted for Anwar, and Fadzilah Mohd Pilus represented Mahathir.

On Aug 30, 1999, High Court judge Datuk Dr R.K. Nathan held that the prime minister was duty-bound to disclose information concerning his ex-deputy.

Noting that Anwar had made many allegations against Mahathir following his removal from the cabinet as well as Umno, Nathan ruled that Mahathir, who is also the Umno president, was obliged and compelled to respond to these attacks.

He also held that Anwar's conduct affected his capacity to meet his public responsi-

bility and it was, therefore, within the scope and right of the prime minister to comment on them.

Following the decision, Mahathir had asked for RM203,958.80 as costs of the proceedings.

Anwar had filed the suit against Mahathir on Jan 25, 1999, claiming aggravated and exemplary damages for words uttered by the prime minister during a press conference on Sept 22, 1998.

He alleged that Mahathir chose to defame him while he was in detention, knowing

that Anwar was in no position to defend himself or make any effective stand against the allegations.

In defence, Mahathir said he made the alleged defamatory statements in the course of discussion on government and political matters which concerned Anwar, and only after due inquiry and investigation into the matters.

Anwar's appeal against the dismissal of his suit was rejected by the Court of Appeal on Dec 9 last year. On Feb 23, the Federal Court denied him leave to appeal.