

21 JAN 2003

Court-Rahim

DAP WANTS TO CALL DR MAHATHIR AND ANWAR AS WITNESSES IN LIBEL SUIT

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 21 (Bernama) -- The DAP is expected to call Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as witnesses at the hearing of a libel suit brought against the party by former Melaka chief minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik.

Karpal Singh, counsel for the DAP, told the High Court here today that the subpoena on Dr Mahathir had been issued but had yet to be served.

However, Anwar had been subpoenaed and was present in court today escorted by policemen.

(Anwar is serving 15 years' jail for corrupt practice and sodomy).

Justice Datuk James Foong fixed tomorrow to hear the case after allowing an application by Karpal Singh who wanted to start the hearing tomorrow because settle several preliminary issues had to be determined.

Foong ordered Anwar to be taken back to prison because the court did not know when he would be required to testify and there was no holding room in the court in Wisma Denmark to keep witnesses from prison.

He said the court would contact the prison authorities and give it one day's notice to bring Anwar to court when needed.

He then proceeded to hear the preliminary issues in chambers.

Abdul Rahim is suing the DAP and its chairman, Lim Kit Siang, and advisor, DAP Dr Chen Man Hin, in connection with the publication and distribution of a book and posters which which he claimed to be libellous.

He claimed that the book and posters were published in connection with a campaign which the defendants started in mid-1998 and that the words published were false, malicious and had no basis.

Lim was the party's secretary-general at that time and Dr Chen, its chairman.

Abdul Rahim claimed that the libellous words were concocted to grab public attention and allegations on his sexual relations with an underage girl were false because he had never been charged with the offence.

He said that the words had affected his good name and political reputation and put him in scandal, odium and contempt.

He is seeking general, aggravated and exemplary damages, interest and other reliefs deemed fit by the court.

-- BERNAMA

JA KHY JK