

Anwar: Anifah said he was ready to defect
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim told the High Court in Kuala Lumpur today that Foreign Minister Anifah Aman was willing to join him in toppling the BN government in 2008 if he (Anwar) had the numbers.

Anwar also told the court that he did not make any offer to Anifah and certainly did not consider him for the post of deputy prime minister.

Testifying in his defamation suit against Anifah, Anwar told the court that Anifah was dissatisfied with then prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for not making him a full-fledged minister.

"He (Anifah) was disgruntled and disappointed. Anifah was only offered the post of deputy transport minister, but he refused the appointment. He said that if I had the numbers, he was keen to join me.

"That is why he came to us, as he thought he could be elevated. A lot of the BN MPs were not happy with the then PM. That was when the Sept 16 (2008) plan was hatched. They came in large numbers to secure their positions."

Anwar said this in the hearing of his suit against Anifah for claiming that the opposition leader had offered him the post of deputy prime minister if he defected.

This was said at a press conference Anifah held in Washington in 2009 with then United States Secretary of State Hilary Clinton.

Anwar said Anifah (below) talked to him through a friend he identified as Tony Voon. This was when Anwar was in Hong Kong, and he said he certainly did not make such an offer to Anifah through a phone call conversation.

The Permatang Pauh MP was testifying in his RM100 million suit against the foreign minister, where Anifah have accused Anwar of making the offer during his first international press conference as foreign minister.

The press conference was reported in a local English daily and the United States' State of Department website.

Anwar was represented by lawyer Razlan Hadri Zulkifli and J Leela.

Anwar said he filed this action against Anifah for the false and baseless remarks he made against him and found it to be an unwarranted and offensive attack against his character.

“Anifah's statement portrays me as unethical, unprincipled and corrupt and untrustworthy person and an unfit politician,” he said.

He added that Anifah’s statement depicted him as unfit to hold political or any office and was dangerous to Malaysian society.

DPM post for Sabah, Sarawak MP

On cross-examination by Anifah’s lawyer Muhammad Shafee Abdullah (below), Anwar admitted that he did offer a post of deputy prime minister for a BN MP from either Sabah or Sarawak.

However, he said he did not have the power alone to assure that this could be met, as this had to be agreed upon by Pakatan Rakyat.

“They were aware that if Pakatan takes over, the Sabah or Sarawak MPs, one of them could become the DPM. This is not something in private,” he admitted.

However, Anwar painted a picture that Anifah was not qualified for the post of DPM, as what the foreign minister had claimed.

He also denied that the statement that a Sabah or Sarawak MP will be made DPM if Pakatan wins is a “bribe”.

“I would not say this is a bribe for people to join, as we profess to the reform agenda,” he said.

Anwar, said when he was in Hong Kong, Voon, a businessman from Kota Kinabalu, handed Anwar his handphone and asked him to talk to Anifah.

The opposition leader told the court he was not sure whether it was Anifah who called Voon or the other way round but this took place somewhere between May and August 2008.

He said at that time Pakatan offered to give more autonomy to Sabah to manage its own state, and part of the discussion involve former Sabah chief minister Yong Teck Lee (above), who also was with him in Hong Kong.

Anwar said he spoke to Anifah, whom he described as a good friend, for about 10 minutes through Voon's phone, but denied making any offer of DPM to Anifah.

“It is not feasible to make an offer within 10 minutes of conversation over the phone. I do not make careless mistakes,” the PKR de facto leader said in replying to a question from Shafee.

Project hijacked due to Taipei trip

Anwar claimed his plan to undermine the BN government was hijacked by the BN government when they sent 40 or so BN MPs to Taipei.

He said at that time, he asked the Dewan Rakyat speaker to convene an immediate session in parliament for a vote of no-confidence against the then PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

“However, the 40 BN MPs were suddenly I check sent abroad to Taipei,” he said.

Anwar agreed most of the MPs who wanted to join him were mostly from Sabah and Sarawak but not all 40 of them.

“There (were) some substantive numbers, some who had given firm commitment. Yes, but I am not at liberty to say anything,” he said.

Asked by Shafee on allegations made by former Bayan Baru MP Zaharin Mohamed Hashim (left) in Parliament that there were plans to make Anifah DPM, Anwar said that was totally nonsense.

The trial will continue before Judicial Commissioner Siti Khadijah Hassan Badjenid, with Shafee's continued cross-examination on Wednesday.

Shafee tried to postpone the hearing earlier, as Anifah wanted to be present but the judge disallowed it and asked it to go on.

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