

**Court Sets Valentine's Date for Anwar Sodomy Trial**  
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KUALA LUMPUR-- The sodomy trial of Anwar Ibrahim will continue at the High Court here from Feb 14 to March 25. High Court Judge Mohamad Zabidin Mohd Diah set the date after meeting Anwar's counsels and public prosecutors in chambers when the case came up for mention today.

The trial at this stage has seen the defence team cross-examine third prosecution witness, Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL) forensic pathologist Dr Siew Sheue Feng.

So far, four prosecution witnesses have been called up. They were the complainant Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan and three HKL experts.

Speaking to reporters later, Anwar's counsel, S.N.Nair said that the defence was concerned with the availability of their medical experts due to floods in Australia.

He said that the experts, involved in DNA and forensic work, would not be free until February 20, because of the floods in Australia, but the defence would try to get one of them to be present during the trial.

The trial was set for mention today after the court had on Dec 6, allowed a request by Anwar's counsel, Karpal Singh, to stay the trial proceedings pending its appeal at the Court of Appeal over Mohamad Zabidin's refusal to recuse himself from hearing the trial.

On Jan 14, the Appeal Court rejected Karpal's appeal and held that Anwar has no right to appeal against the High Court judge's decision as the ruling was made at the interlocutory stage in the course of the trial.

Justice Mohamad Zabidin had on Dec 6, last year, rejected Anwar's second bid to recuse him from hearing the trial.

Anwar, 63, made the application on grounds that the judge had intimidated his counsel during the last proceedings and that even though the judge had withdrawn the alleged intimidation, there was a real danger of bias if the judge was to continue hearing his case.

Mohamad Zabidin had also rejected Anwar's first application to have him disqualified, which was filed on grounds of bias when Mohamad Zabidin refused to entertain his counsel's request to cite Utusan Malaysia for contempt over two articles carried by the newspaper.

Anwar filed an appeal to the Court of Appeal but later withdrew it. Anwar is charged with sodomising Mohd Saiful, 25, his former personal aide, at Unit 11-5-1 of Desa Damansara Condominium in Jalan Setiakasih, Bukit Damansara, between 3.01pm and 4.30pm on June 26, 2008.

(Bernama)

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