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Acquitted

> Anwar found not guilty
of sodomising Saiful

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KUALA LUMPUR: Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, was yesterday acquitted of a charge of sodomising his personal aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan three-and-a-half years ago.

Justice Datuk Mohamad Zabidin Mohd Diah in his verdict said that at the end of the defence case, the court was reluctant to convict Anwar based solely on uncorroborated evidence of Mohd Saiful.

"The court could not with 100% certainty

exclude the possibility that the integrity of the DNA samples collected from Mohd Saiful had been compromised," said the judge who took about three minutes to deliver oral judgment in the packed courtroom.

(DNA samples had been taken from Mohd Saiful's anus on June 28, 2008, the day he lodged a police report on the alleged incident on June 26, 2008)

In acquitting and discharging Anwar, the judge said as it was not safe for the court to rely only on DNA evidence in coming to the decision, and there was no evidence to corroborate with Mohd Saiful's testimony.



VINDICATED... Anwar and wife Wan Azizah with supporters outside the Jalan Duta court complex yesterday after the verdict.

Anwar, 64, had been charged with sodomising Mohd Saiful, 26, at a Desa Damansara condominium in Bukit Damansara here, between 3.10pm and 4.30pm on June 26, 2008.

The offence under Section 377B of the Penal Code carried a penalty of up to 20 years' jail and whipping, upon conviction.

Anwar's six children, who were present, immediately hugged one another in joy as his supporters in the public gallery shouted "Allahuakbar" and applauded the court decision.

Anwar, clad in a black blazer, light blue shirt and black pants hugged his wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who is PKR president, and was congratulated by many VIPs who attended the court proceedings.

Outside, about 5,000 other supporters who had assembled in the car park since early morning also burst into shouts of "Allahu Akbar" upon learning of Anwar's acquittal.

The peaceful assembly was however marred when three homemade bombs went off in the vicinity of the Jalan Duta court complex later, injuring five people. (More reports on Pages 4 and 5)

When approached by the press, Anwar who claimed to be "a little surprised" and "a little relieved" (by the decision) said: "Thank God. Alhamdulillah. I feel vindicated. Justice is done ..."

"Finally, my name is cleared and justice is upheld. It has been a tough few years for us (the family). But I cannot say much more, because the prosecution can still appeal. I'm just thankful for what I heard today," Anwar said.

Meanwhile, Solicitor-General II Datuk Mohamed Yusof Zainal Abiden told reporters that the prosecution would discuss the judgment before deciding on whether to appeal the decision.

"We have 14 days to file our notice of appeal," said Mohamed Yusof, who had led the prosecution.