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# 'Cabinet told of losses'

> Anwar says he was aware of dealings before tabling report

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PUTRAJAYA: A heated exchange ensued in the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) hearing yesterday between opposition de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and RCI chairman Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan.

Anwar stood firm that the Cabinet was informed of the losses sustained by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) but Sidek denied this and said the Cabinet did not know of the actual losses that BNM sustained.

The conducting officer, Julia Othman, referring to the 1992 financial report, asked Anwar to confirm if the report was tabled in the Cabinet.

"Yes it was. I was aware of the huge losses before tabling the report. Tan Sri Zain (Treasury secretary-general Tan Sri Zain Azraai Zainal Abidin) said there was some Forex trading in BNM. But the governor (Tan Sri Jaafar Hussein) said this was to protect the ringgit," Anwar said.

Panel member Tan Sri Saw Choo Boon then said the Cabinet was probably aware of some of the losses but they did not know the

actual amount. The only figure that was given was RM5.7 billion.

Anwar said the Cabinet knew of BNM's audited report, but Sidek interjected and refuted this, saying that he was in the Cabinet meeting on April 6, 1994 where it was stated there was no loss in 1992.

"The amount may have been a forward position. Twenty years later, we got new information and we glued them all together, that's not right," Anwar said.

He reiterated that as a finance minister then, he presented the annual reports and auditor-general's reports.

"What should the head of department, treasury secretary-general or minister do? Give your personal view or table a report given to you? It has always been the SOP of the government. To table reports given to them as well as the AG's (auditor-general) report. If not satisfied, then the AG should be questioned," Anwar said.

Anwar then cautioned that no exceptions should be made to the rule "just to fit in other designs" as it may happen now.

"We have to stick to the reports and the facts."

Anwar also jested he had the support of his boss, then prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed, until 1998.

The RCI is looking at Forex losses sustained by BNM in the 1990s. The inquiry is to continue on Sept 18.



(Top) Anwar waving to the crowd as he leaves the court after the hearing yesterday.

Mahathir arriving at the court yesterday.

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