

Court begins fifth day of Anwar's sodomy appeal minus crowds of supporters

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More police than PKR supporters were outside the Palace of Justice in Putrajaya this morning, where the Federal Court will begin its fifth day of hearing Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's appeal against his sodomy conviction.

Police have cordoned off the road in front of the court complex and redirected traffic to alternative roads. Security is tight and only those with relevant passes are allowed entry into the building.

Besides numerous media personnel outside the Palace of Justice, there was a conspicuous lack of PKR or Anwar supporters as of 8.41am. The hearing on Anwar's appeal is due to begin at 9am.

Today will be the second day of submissions by the prosecution, led by Umno lawyer Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah.

He began making submissions last Friday, by telling the court there was no political conspiracy as claimed by the opposition leader, and that Anwar and the complainant, his former aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, had what could be construed as a "relationship".

Shafee also submitted on the defence's claim that DNA evidence tendered during the sodomy trial had been tampered with by the police investigating officer.

Anwar is alleged to have sodomised Saiful on June 26, 2008 at a condominium unit in Bukit Damansara. He was acquitted by the High Court over doubts regarding the DNA evidence, but this was overturned by the Court of Appeal in March this year.

After proceedings adjourned last Friday, Shafee told reporters he had completed about 20 to 30% of his submissions.

Shafee has been given a temporary licence by the Attorney-General to prosecute in this case.

The bench, chaired by Chief Justice Tun Arifin Zakaria, is expected to extend the hearing of the appeal until tomorrow due to the volume of submissions. After Shafee ends his submission, the defence will make a closing reply.

This is the second sodomy charge against Anwar. The first was in 1998, after he was

sacked from government as deputy prime minister and finance minister.

This time, he faces a jail term of five years. The prosecution has also filed a cross-appeal seeking to enhance his sentence which could be extended up to 20 years under the law. – November 3, 2014.

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