

'Azad did not withhold publication of 30 pages'

NEW DELHI, Oct 25 (PTI) It was not Maulana Azad who decided to withhold the publication of 30 controversial pages of his "India Wins Freedom" for 30 years, but co-author Prof Humayun Kabir after consulting Jawaharlal Nehru, a close aide of the Maulana claimed here on Tuesday.

The Maulana's private secretary, Mr M. V. Masud, said in an interview with the deputy director of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Mr Harideo Sharma, that Azad died on February 22, 1958 after a sudden stroke.

He had not taken any decision regarding the publication of the

pages then, Mr Masud said in the interview, the transcripts of which were made available to PTI on Tuesday.

"If he had been alive there would never have been any question of not publishing even a single page or a line which he had approved," says Mr Masud.

Mr Masud, who was former ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Yemen, in the interview, said after the Maulana's death, Prof Kabir in consultation with Nehru decided not to publish the 30 pages because he thought he would be held responsible for what the Maulana had said.

"Kabir was then a minister and a

politician and naturally he thought that his position as a politician might receive a setback if the views of the Maulana, which he alone could express and did express, were ascribed to him (Kabir) who had only translated what was dictated to him," he added.

Mr Masud said because of the sudden death of Maulana, the proposed agreement with the publishers could not be signed by him.

There was also nothing in writing by the Maulana to show that the book had been dictated or approved by him.

"Thus Kabir's position became

somewhat awkward in the sense that he could not go to the public and say that it was approved by the Maulana," he said.

Mr Masud said a section of the Indian people had made Kabir responsible for those episodes in the biography which they perhaps did not like or approve.

"But I can say and I think I am in a position to say that every word was the Maulana's own and this can be very easily checked" by a comparison of the styles of speech of the Maulana and Prof Kabir, he said.