

26 OCT 1999

Mahathir-Court

ANWAR'S LAWYERS HAVE NO RIGHT TO SUMMON ME TO COURT, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said lawyers of his former deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim have no right to summon him to court to testify in Anwar's sodomy trial if the questions are irrelevant to the case.

"I don't think they have a right to summon me to give evidence on conspiracy or arsenic (poisoning)," Dr Mahathir said when reporters asked him if he would attend the sodomy trial of Anwar on Thursday as ordered by the Kuala Lumpur High Court recently.

Reporters approached the prime minister on the matter after he opened the Africa-Asia Business Forum here today.

"If I can give evidence to show that sodomy has taken place and that Datuk Seri Anwar is involved, then I will appear in court," Dr Mahathir said.

The prime minister said in Anwar's corruption trial previously, Anwar's lawyers wanted him to appear in court as their witness.

"I consented. They wrote to me asking me to appear in court," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he then asked them what questions they wanted to ask him which they did.

The prime minister said they decided not to call him to court after he informed them that he would only answer their questions in court.

"So now I am asking them again what questions they want to ask me.

"Even if they want to interview me, I want to know what questions, whether they are relevant to sodomy or not," Dr Mahathir said.

The prime minister said questions on Anwar's conspiracy theory and arsenic poisoning would not be part of the sodomy trial.

Dr Mahathir however reiterated that if he was required to attend court, "of course I will appear in court."

Asked if he has received the subpoena, Dr Mahathir said he has not received it.

"Maybe it has been served. I don't know," the prime minister added.

Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah today gave notice to the High Court that the prosecution will consider applying to set aside the subpoena on Dr Mahathir to come to court on the ground of relevancy.

Mohtar said the subpoena was issued on the prime minister on the application of the second accused Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, and not Anwar, his adopted brother.

Anwar, 52, is being jointly tried with his adopted brother, Sukma 38, on a charge of sodomising his wife's former driver, Azizan Abu Bakar, 39, at Sukma's apartment in Tivoli Villa, Bangsar, here, one night at 7.45 between January and March 1993.

Sukma, a businessman, faces another charge of abetting Anwar to sodomise Azizan at the same place and time.

-- BERNAMA

ES RYN