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Defence decides against calling Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The defence has decided not to call Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as its witness as the Prime Minister has indicated that he will not give them a signed statement.

Leading counsel Raja Aziz Addruse informed the court that the defence had also decided not to call First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob.

Raja Aziz said Dr Mahathir had asked to be informed on the topics of his proposed evidence.

Raja Aziz added that the defence had sent him a list of questions but his personal secretary indicated the Prime Minister would not give a signed statement.

"It's our usual procedure to get a signed statement, voluntarily of course.

"As we are not in a position to know exactly what sort of evidence can be adduced from the Prime Minister without a signed statement, we are not calling him," Raja Aziz said.

Judge Datuk S. Augustine Paul, however, said he wanted to make clear that it was within the right of a witness to refuse to give a signed statement.

On Megat Junid, Raja Aziz said the defence had interviewed him and found he had nothing to contribute as the judge had ruled that political conspiracy was not relevant.

He did not tell the court why the defence had decided not to call Daim and Abdul Rahim.

However, he told the New Straits Times later that the defence decided against calling Daim also because political conspiracy had been ruled irrelevant.

Raja Aziz said Daim had also asked for questions but the defence decided not to follow this up after political conspiracy was ruled out. On Abdul Rahim, he said the defence had interviewed him but the former IGP refused to give a signed statement.

Raja Aziz also said the Prime Minister had indicated that he would be willing to give evidence in court but did not want to give a signed statement.

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