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Dr M ready to testify in Anwar's trial

YAN, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he was prepared to testify in court as a witness in the ongoing sodomy trial of his former deputy.

"Now I've been called (to testify) as a witness and I will go.

"I know there's nothing ... It's just that Karpal (Singh) wants to prolong the trial, that's why I'm being called," Dr Mahathir said, adding that he expected the trial to drag on until after the general election.

The Prime Minister was addressing about 5,000 people at a gathering comprising mostly pasar tani participants who had attended a national convention in Alor Star this morning.

The High Court has fixed Oct 28 for Dr Mahathir to testify for the defence in the Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim sodomy trial.

Anwar and his adopted brother, businessman Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja were ordered by the Kuala Lumpur High Court on Monday to enter their defence on charges of sodomy and abetment.

Anwar and Sukma are charged with sodomising former driver Azizan Abu Bakar in 1993.

Sukma is also facing a second charge of abetting Anwar in sodomising Azizan, who is the former driver of Anwar's wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Dr Mahathir also said he expected Karpal - who is one of the lawyers representing Anwar, to prolong the trial by raising various issues. "Just recently, Karpal accused people in high places of poisoning his client with arsenic."

Earlier, Dr Mahathir called on the people to be united to prevent being re-colonised by foreign powers.

He said people should realise the country could not remain independent forever just because it had achieved independence once.

"We can only remain free and independent if we are united. Otherwise foreigners will try to recolonise us again and they are already trying it," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was a group which supported foreigners who tried to destabilise the Government by holding demonstrations and rioting.

He said the group hoped the Government would fall because of their action.

"This group comprises members of Parti Keadilan, Pas, DAP and others. They are like the fifth column in our country...however, the group is getting smaller by the day," he said, adding the Government would go all out to prevent foreigners from gaining control of the country's economy.

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