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Dr M urged to 'voluntarily' testify at Anwar's trial

PENANG, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was today urged to voluntarily appear to testify at the trial of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim even if the subpoena had not been served on him.

Anwar's lawyer Karpal Singh said the Prime Minister had "nothing to fear" and should appear in court to testify on Monday.

"Following the constitutional amendments of 1993, even the rulers including the King, can be subjected to a subpoena to appear before a court (special court) and they have to comply," he said.

"As it is a known fact that a subpoena had been issued against Dr Mahathir, irrespective of whether it has been served on him, the Prime Minister should lead by example and voluntarily offer to testify," he said.

Karpal added that Dr Mahathir should not make his willingness to testify conditional "because the issues of relevance and admissibility are for the judge to decide".

He said Dr Mahathir should not be afraid to take the stand as lawyers were bound by a code of conduct to ask only questions relevant to the case.

"Thus it is for the judge to decide, at any time when objections are raised, whether a question is relevant.

"Lawyers cannot ask anything they like. Questions that insult the witnesses, for example, are considered misconduct and a judge may disallow the question, and direct the Disciplinary Board to take action against the lawyer."

Anwar is charged with sodomising his former family driver.

(END)