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PM repeats willingness to testify at Anwar's trial

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today repeated his willingness to testify at the trial of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, but said he should not be summoned to answer irrelevant questions.

The Prime Minister said as it was a sodomy trial, he would be willing to testify if he could give evidence that the sodomy had taken place, and Anwar was involved.

However, he said he did not think the lawyers had a right to summon him to give evidence on matters like conspiracy or arsenic poisoning.

"If I am required to appear in court, of course, I will appear. I haven't received the subpoena, maybe it has been served, I don't know," he said after opening the Africa-Asia Business Forum today.

The High Court hearing Anwar's trial was told this morning that the subpoena has not been served yet.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to take the stand on Thursday, but Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah told the court today that he was considering applying for the subpoena to be set aside.

Anwar, who is charged with sodomising his former family driver Azizan Abu Bakar, has claimed that the charge against him was fabricated as part of a political conspiracy to topple him.

He had also alleged arsenic poisoning, but subsequent medical tests revealed no such signs.

Anwar is charged together with his adopted brother Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja. The former Deputy Prime Minister is now giving evidence in his defence.

When asked if he would agree to an interview with Anwar's lawyers before he took the stand, Dr Mahathir said the last time around (at Anwar's first trial for corruption), the defence also wanted to interview him.

"I asked them what questions they want to ask ... and I told them that I would answer those questions in court, and they decided not to call me.

"Now, I am asking them again. What questions do they want to ask me? I want to know what questions, whether they are relevant to sodomy or not," he said.

If the questions were about arsenic poisoning or conspiracy, they were not relevant, he added.

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