

Judge: No proof Mahathir involved in alleged plot

# PM NEED NOT TESTIFY

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Prime Minister does not have to testify at Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy trial.**

The High Court made the decision today after ruling that there is no evidence Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad plotted against his former deputy.

Justice Datuk Ariffin Jaka said there is not an iota of evidence by any witness so far to show Mahathir was involved in a political conspiracy to topple Anwar, who was also finance minister, and it would not be a matter for this trial, even if there exists such a conspiracy.

"I therefore come to the inevitable conclusion that the defence has failed to prove its case why Dr Mahathir must come to this court. I rule that

By **ARFA'EZA A. AZIZ**

Dr Mahathir need not testify," he said.

Mahathir's status as prime minister did not have a bearing on his decision, he said, adding: "I treat Dr Mahathir just like any other citizen in this country without any privilege as to his attendance in court."

Anwar immediately stood up after the judge had made his ruling and spoke angrily, denouncing the decision.

Anwar, 52, and his adopted brother Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, 39, are separately charged with sodomising former driver Azizah Abu Bakar, 39, at Sukma's apartment in Tivoli Villa, Bangsar, between January and March 1993.

Sukma, a businessman, faces another charge of abetting Anwar in sodomising Azizah, the for-

mer driver of Anwar's wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail at the same time and place.

Anwar's leading counsel, Christopher Fernando, said he was instructed by his client to inform the court that Anwar's confidence in the whole administration of justice "has been completely eroded".

"His (Anwar) immediate reaction now is to abandon this trial because he feels that his chances of succeeding in this trial is next to zero but, in any case, he has accepted my advice to think over this matter seriously over the weekend and let us know what he wishes to do when he meets us on Monday," he said.

Karpal Singh, who also represented Anwar, said the defence needs more time to consider the next course of action or option available.

Arifin then fixed Wednesday to continue hearing the case (see also Page 4).