

Dr M: Not
for me to

free Anwar

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BANGKOK: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is in no position to release former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from prison.

"I wish I am the King of Malaysia, then I can grant pardons on my birthdays. But I am only a prime minister and I have to obey the law," he said when responding to a question at a press conference here yesterday.

The question was whether he would release Anwar "as a magnanimous act before he retired at the end of this month."

Dr Mahathir said the law stated that when a person was convicted and sentenced in court, it was up to the courts to hear his appeal.

"So, it is not for me to say: 'Now I am retiring and I would like to release all the prisoners in Malaysia'. If I did that I would be very popular with the prisoners. But I don't think I will be popular with the people," he said.