

Mahathir to testify next month in Ling cheating trial

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The Kuala Lumpur High Court was informed today that former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be called as defence witness at the cheating trial of former transport minister Dr Ling Liong Sik.

"We will be calling Mahathir," defence counsel Wong Kian Kheong said when re-examining Ling this morning.

However, Wong did not disclose further details.

A source close to the defence counsel told reporters that a subpoena has been issued for Mahathir to appear in court next month.

"Probably he (Mahathir) will appear in court in the week of Oct 8," the source said.

Ling, 69, is defending himself against a charge of cheating the cabinet between Sept 25 and Nov 6, 2002, when Mahathir was prime minister.

He was charged on July 29, 2010, under Section 418 of the Penal Code, which carries a penalty of up to seven years in prison, or a fine, or both.

He faces two alternative charges of cheating and intentionally omitting information in his report to the cabinet on the additional interest rate, which carries up to five years' jail term or a fine, or both.

Ling, who was called to enter his defence in March, had previously testified that he dared not cheat Mahathir, and that the latter was kept fully involved in everything he had done.

Meanwhile, the source also said the defence would call an expert witness and Rais Yatim, the then de-facto law minister assigned to look into the PKFZ land acquisition issue.

Earlier, the court agreed to postpone to trial, as Ling complained of dizziness caused by low blood sugar and said he needed to go to hospital for treatment.

The hearing has been adjourned to Friday, when Ling will continued to be re-examined by his lawyer.

As lead prosecutor Tun Abdul Majid Tun Hamzah was leaving, he spotted Ling still outside the courtroom.

This prompted him to say sarcastically and loudly "he (Lim) told the court he was on the way to hospital, but he (is) still around... he (is) still around".

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