

Anwar on why he was sacked as DPM

KUALA LUMPUR: When the RM100 million defamation suit filed by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim against Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is heard next year, expect it to be a political minefield.

The former deputy prime minister yesterday signalled his intention to revisit some allegations against Dr Mahathir, and go beyond arguing that he was not a homosexual.

Replying to the former PM's

statement of defence, Anwar said he was sacked as deputy prime minister in 1998 as part of a political conspiracy hatched by his former mentor.

He also alleged that his troubles with Dr Mahathir began in 1995, over certain "courses of action" he had taken in dealing with mismanagement and misuse of funds in the Government, public corporations and Umno.

Anwar also contended that

the former PM had felt threatened by his popularity in Umno and among Malaysians, and feared that he would challenge his political power.

The defamation case stems from remarks Dr Mahathir made last September at an international rights gathering.

"I cannot have a person who is like that in my Cabinet who may succeed and become the prime minister," Dr Mahathir had said at the time.

"Imagine having a gay prime minister. Nobody would be safe."

Dr Mahathir made the comments in explaining why he had sacked Anwar.

Anwar argued that the remarks were untrue and malicious. He demanded an apology from his former boss and RM100 million, but Dr Mahathir refused and said he would defend his case.

In his defence, Dr Mahathir

said he was justified in calling Anwar a homosexual as it was a matter of public interest. He also claimed qualified privilege. He also referred to a Federal Court judgment on Sept 2 2004 allowing Anwar's appeal against his conviction for sodomy, but noted that there was evidence to suggest he was involved in homosexual activities with his adoptive brother, Sukma Darmawati Saamitaat Madja.