

**Anwar's defence questions Chemistry Department's credibility**  
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**By Debra Chong**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 25 — The credibility of the government's Chemistry Department in conducting DNA analyses was raised in Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy trial today, after the defence team questioned whether its laboratory met international standards.

Lawyers for Anwar told the High Court today they had documents to show that the government laboratory, based in Petaling Jaya, had yet to receive its certification of accreditation from The American Society of Crime Lab Directors (ASCLD).

Ramkarpal Singh Deo drew the court's attention to two documents they said showed the laboratory had applied for the accreditation certificate in 2005, but was rejected.

The second document was a letter from ASCLB dated April this year, saying their application had been extended until October to submit documentation to support their application.

This, they argued, meant that the laboratory did not meet with international standards.

Australian scientist Dr Brian McDonald also testified that all sorts of testing for DNA have to be standardised, when questioned by Ramkarpal if there were any safeguards in DNA testing.

The molecular geneticist, a defence witness, said that accreditation was one of the ways to ensure the laboratories meet world standards.

Dr McDonald had sat on Australia's National Association of Testing Authorities (Nata), which is regarded as the equivalent to ASCLP.

Previously, the court was told by the prosecution's DNA expert, Dr Seah Lay Hoong that the laboratory was ASCLD-accredited.

The laboratory had run several DNA tests, including those belonging to sodomy complainant Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan in 2008.

Anwar's other lawyer Sankara Nair told reporters during a break in the proceedings that the accreditation was important because it demonstrates the laboratory is a qualified forensic lab, and one that is also qualified to handle DNA analyses.

He explained that under the accreditation, the Chemistry Department's laboratory work will also be monitored by ASCLB.

"Now, they don't even have the ISO MM17025 standard for forensic labs," Sankara said.

"It's a question of credibility, the credibility of the lab and of Dr Seah as a scientist," he added.

Lead prosecutor Datuk Yusof Zainal Abiden objected to the defence's attempt to submit the documents on accreditation to the court as evidence.

The Solicitor-General II said the evidence should not be tendered while Dr McDonald was in the witness stand; arguing he has nothing to do with the accreditation procedure.

The defence has said it will ask for a subpoena to bring to court the Chemistry Department's chief, named as Lim Kong Boon, to clarify its laboratory's accreditation status.

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