

**Dr M called to testify in Liong Sik trial**  
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**By Hafidz Baharom**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 26 — Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been issued a court order to testify in defence of former Cabinet minister Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik's ongoing cheating trial involving the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ), a source disclosed today.

"He's been subpoenaed. For the week starting October 8," a spokesman for the defence team told reporters at court, referring to Malaysia's fourth and longest-serving prime minister of 22 years.

However, Datuk Tun Majid Tun Hamzah, who is leading the prosecution team against Dr Ling, said he had been informed by former transport minister's lawyer, Wong Kian Kheong, that Dr Mahathir will testify as early as next week.

"He said next week," Tun Majid told The Malaysian Insider in a text message, referring to Wong.

Dr Mahathir, who was in office from 1981 to October 2003, had previously been implicated in the multi-billion ringgit land scandal that began as a project aimed at turning Port Klang into a regional transport hub.

In his previous testimony last July 13, Dr Ling told the court that Dr Mahathir had been kept "fully involved" throughout the entire conception process of the PKFZ project.

"The PM was kept fully involved in everything I did. He (Dr Mahathir) was so kind... he knew I was onto something good so I could fly overseas anytime.

"Because when I have meetings with shipping agencies abroad, I cannot wait for Cabinet to approve my leave so he would let me go," he said then when asked to explain how the idea for PKFZ had come about.

"In any government, if the PM supports you, three-quarters of the battle is won... and he (Dr Mahathir) was so supportive," he added.

The former transport minister who served for 17 years from January 1986 to May 2003 launched into a lengthy tale behind the conception of the PKFZ, which he said was mooted to save the country's busiest port from further decline and to lift it to become one of the world's top 10 ports.

The former MCA president is charged with deceiving the Cabinet into approving the purchase of 999.5 acres of land for the PKFZ project, which had resulted in wrongful losses for the government.

He also faces two alternative charges of deceiving the Cabinet into believing that the terms of the purchase — at RM25 psf plus 7.5 per cent interest — were acknowledged and agreed to by the Valuation and Property Services Department (JPPH) despite knowing that there was no such agreement.

Dr Ling faces a possible jail term of up to seven years, or a fine, or both, if convicted on the first charge under Section 418 of the Penal Code.

The alternative charges carry a lighter sentence of five years' jail, or a fine, or both.

The trial before High Court judge Datuk Ahmadi Asnawi will resume this Friday.

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