

11 JAN 1996

Execution-Karpal '''

KARPAL IN LAST DITCH ATTEMPT TO SAVE DEATH ROW DUO

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 11 (Bernama) -- Lawyer Karpal Singh, in his 11th hour attempt to save the lives of two drug traffickers who are scheduled to hang tomorrow, tried to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad at Parliament House today to get a stay of execution.

But he told reporters that he was unsuccessful and instead conveyed his intention to Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Nazri Abdul Aziz.

Earlier, Karpal Singh, flanked by close member of the death row duo, told a news conference at his office here that he would try to meet the prime minister, even by camping outside his residence tonight.

"Failing which I will go as far as to see the Yang di-Pertuan Agong," said Karpal Singh, who is one of the most prominent defence counsel for drug trafficking cases in the country.

Mustaffa Kamal Abdul Aziz, 39 and Mohamed Radi Abdul Majid, 57, both hawkers at Chow Road here, were sentenced to death on March 9, 1991, for trafficking in 1,187gm of cannabis.

Karpal Singh said he was seeking a stay of execution on humanitarian and technical grounds.

"The two were informed about their execution for tomorrow morning only this morning. They should be given reasonable time to enable them to settle personal and family matters or to make a will," he said.

He also produced a letter from Solicitor-Attorney Datuk Heliliah Mohamed Yusof in reply to his appeal to the Attorney-General Chambers to intervene for a stay of execution.

In the letter, Heliliah said all avenues of the law had been exhausted and nothing could be done in the matter as their appeal for clemency had been rejected by the Supreme Court as well as the Pardons Board in 1993.

Among those present at the news conference were Mustaffa's mother Sinusi Putih, 65, wife Nurhayati Abidin, 30, and son Mustaffa Shamheirt, 10.

Karpal Singh told reporters at Parliament House that the outcome of his appeal to the prime minister through Nazri was expected to be known tonight.

Karpal Singh later told Bernama that Dr Mahathir had conveyed through Nazri that it was too late to get a stay of execution.

He thanked Nazri for conveying the message.

On his earlier statement to go to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Karpal Singh said it would not be advisable to do so. -- Bernama