

Anwar's bid to attend Parliament rejected
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The Prisons Department has rejected opposition Anwar Ibrahim's request to attend the Dewan Rakyat proceedings next week.

According to a PKR official, the letter was received by Anwar's lawyers and family members this afternoon.

The opening of the next Parliamentary session will be held on March 9.

During such opening sessions, the opposition leader traditionally joins the Yang di-Pertuan Agong for tea.

According to a report on the BN Backbenchers Club (BNBBC) website, Anwar's application was rejected on grounds that he is now bound by prison procedures and a copy of the rejection letter had been sent to Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia.

Family submitted applications

Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who oversees the Prisons Department, tweeted a link to an Agenda Daily article that reproduced the BNBBC report.

PKR had argued that Anwar should be allowed to attend the new Parliament session, since a royal pardon application had been made and as such, Anwar remains parliamentary opposition leader and Permatang Pauh MP until the Pardons Board makes a decision.

Anwar is currently being held at the Sungai Buloh Prison where he is serving a five-year jail term after being convicted of sodomising a former aide.

Both the royal pardon application and the application to allow him to attend Parliament were sent in by his family members.

The forthcoming Parliament session will be inaugural session for the 2015 calendar year.

Reporting by Ram Anand and Koh Jun Lin.