

## **John Kerry raises Anwar issue in talk with PM**

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**By Geraldine Tong**

US Secretary of State John Kerry said he raised the issue of former opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim in his talk with Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Kerry, who is in Malaysia for a two-day visit to attend the Asean meetings, had bilateral talks with Najib and Anifah yesterday.

"I raised concerns about freedom of expression and I spoke to the prime minister about Anwar Ibrahim's situation (in the bilateral talks)," he said at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

Kerry did not elaborate on how the discussions about freedom of expression and Anwar went.

On Feb 10, Anwar was convicted of sodomising a former aide and is currently serving a five-year jail sentence in Sungai Buloh prison.

However, opposition supporters and human rights groups have criticised the verdict, saying the proceedings were politically motivated.

Last week, British Prime Minister [David Cameron](#) also spoke to Najib about the treatment of Anwar during his visit to Malaysia.

British newspaper *The Telegraph* had reported that Cameron also challenged his Malaysian counterpart to clean up his government, in reference to allegations that RM2.6 billion had been deposited into the PM's personal accounts, as well as other issues plaguing 1MDB.

Anwar's conviction received a chorus of criticisms and concerns from various governments, including the US.

The jailed politician, declared a "prisoner of conscience" by global human rights organisation Amnesty International, had also been facing increasingly serious health problems while in jail.

In December last year, before the apex court verdict, US vice-president Joe Biden (*photo*) [tweeted](#) on Malaysia's use of sedition to silence opposition, but expressed hope that the government would make things right through Anwar's case.

"Anwar's appeal gives Malaysia a vital chance to make things right and promote confidence in its democracy and judiciary," Biden added then.

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