

Lawyer seeks postponement for Najib's judicial review bid

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KUALA LUMPUR: A crucial witness is expected to file an affidavit to support Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak's leave application to commence a judicial review to challenge the existence of an *addendum* decree purportedly ordered by the 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong for the former prime minister to serve his remaining six-year imprisonment under house arrest.

During a hearing of the leave application at the High Court yesterday, Najib's counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah informed Judge Datuk Amarjeet Singh that the witness is observing the last 10 days of *Ramadan* in Mecca.

"In lieu of my application, I am seeking a short adjournment because one person, who is the most critical witness, has not signed the affidavit because the person has left for Mecca and is expected to be back after *Hari Raya Aidilfitri*.

➤ Move made due to absence of key witness to confirm *addendum* decree for remainder of sentence to be served at home

"The affidavit is critical. I require a short date, perhaps to a date I have consulted with my learned friend on April 17."

Senior federal counsel Ahmad Hanir Hambaly, who appeared for the respondents, did not object to the matter. Amarjeet then allowed the adjournment to April 17 and ordered the written submissions to be filed on April 15, Bernama reported.

He also dismissed an application by counsel Abhilaash Subramaniam, who represented the proceedings as a watching brief on grounds that the leave has not yet been granted and is still an

ex-parte application.

However, Muhammad Shafee declined to reveal the identity of the crucial witness. Najib filed the leave application to the High Court on April 1 through Messrs Shafee & Co.

The former Pekan MP named the home affairs minister, Prisons commissioner-general, attorney-general, Pardons Board for the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya, minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform), director-general of the Legal Affairs Division in the Prime Minister's Department and the government as the first to seventh respondents.

In the application notice, Najib sought a *mandamus* order directing either all respondents or one of them to respond and verify the existence of the *addendum* decree dated Jan 29.

He also sought a *mandamus* order acknowledging the existence of the *addendum* decree and directing all or one of the respondents to enforce it immediately by transferring him from the Kajang Prison to his residence in Kuala Lumpur to serve the remainder of his prison sentence under house arrest. Najib, 70, has been serving his sentence at the Kajang Prison since Aug 23, 2022 after being convicted of misappropriating RM42 million from SRC International Sdn Bhd.

He subsequently filed a petition for a royal pardon on Sept 2, 2022.

The Pardons Board reduced his jail term from 12 years to six and a fine imposed on him from RM210 million to RM50 million.