

'Addendum on Najib's house arrest not concealed'

> Matter not discussed during Pardons Board meeting in 2023, says PM

BUKIT MERTAJAM: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has firmly stated that the government has not concealed any addendum related to a house arrest option for former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak.

He said the issue surrounding the addendum, which would purportedly allow Najib to serve the remainder of his sentence under house arrest, was not discussed during the Pardons Board meeting in 2023.

"I was part of the Board in 2023 as I was serving as federal territories minister at the time."

"During the meeting, this matter (addendum) was not raised while I was present, nor was it brought up when Dr Zaliha Mustafa (minister in the Prime Minister's Department [Federal Territories]) was there.

That is the reality - nothing was hidden," he said when officiating at the Muhibbah

Madani programme on Saturday.

Anwar said he needed to respond to the two-week-old accusation that the government had concealed the documents because it involved legal matters that needed to be fully understood.

Anwar clarified that the addendum was sent to the attorney-general and not to him or to any member of the Pardons Board.

"The (then) attorney-general then forwarded the documents to Istana Negara when there was a change of the King, as it is the King who chairs the Pardons Board. That's how it happened, not something that we concealed."

Anwar said he then brought the matter of Najib's house arrest to the attention of His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim.

"In Najib's case, I brought up the matter myself because, although I disagree with the individual, we must give His Majesty the opportunity to consider his appeal.

"I didn't want to mention or discuss this before, as it involves the King."

On Jan 3, Istana Negara issued a statement clarifying that any request for a pardon or reduction in sentence for a convict must be submitted by the convict himself for consideration by the Pardons Board, chaired by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Anwar added that he presented Najib's pardon application for consideration by the 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, during a Pardons Board meeting.

"When the 11th agenda was brought up, the King, as chair, asked about this particular case, while the other 10 cases were presented by the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department.

"Since the paper was with me, His Majesty asked me to present it. I presented it, explaining why Najib was imprisoned, his sentence, the public's concerns, international perspectives, prison reports and the new unresolved case.

"We also had to consider his past as prime minister and chief minister, his contributions to the country, his good prison record and overall health, with occasional hospital visits."

As a result of the Pardons Board's meeting on Jan 29, 2024, Najib's prison sentence was reduced from 12 years to six years, and his fine was reduced from RM210 million to RM50 million, Bernama reported.

Najib, who has been serving his sentence at Kajang Prison since Aug 23, 2022 after being convicted of embezzling RM42 million from SRC International Sdn Bhd, filed a petition for a royal pardon on Sept 2, 2022.