

PM: I KEPT MUM, RESPECTING JUDICIAL SELECTION PROCESS

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This adheres to Constitution's system of checks and balances, says Anwar

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he refrained from commenting on the appointment of the chief justice and other senior judges out of respect for the judicial selection process.

He added that this was part of observing a system of checks and

balances as enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

"For a week, the opposition attacked me, calling me a destroyer of the judiciary. But which judge have I removed? Who has been dismissed? None," he said.

Anwar said he remained silent because the appointment process required the consent of the king.

"I receive the names from the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC), evaluate them, sub-

mit them to the king, and upon His Majesty's approval, they are discussed at the Conference of Rulers.

"Only after I meet with the rulers to provide an explanation, and the king gives his consent, can I respond."

Anwar said eight newly appointed Court of Appeal judges and 14 High Court judges would be sworn in on July 28.

He was speaking at the launch of the Bumiputera Master Plan, Tunas Madani and the JKP Sdn Bhd Housing Project at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Penang yesterday.

On Friday, His Majesty Sultan

Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, consented to the appointment of Datuk Wan Ahmad Farid Wan Salleh as the new chief justice.

According to a statement from the Chief Registrar's Office, the decision was made based on the advice of the prime minister and after consulting the Conference of Rulers, in line with Article 122B(1) of the Federal Constitution.

The king also approved the appointments of Datuk Abu Bakar Jais as the Court of Appeal president, and Datuk Azizah Nawawi as the chief judge of Sabah and Sarawak, replacing the current officeholder who is set to retire.