

Anwar's family seeks last-minute royal pardon
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The family of opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is seeking a royal pardon for his sodomy conviction, a PKR spokesperson confirmed today.

PKR communications director Fahmi Fadzil told The Malaysian Insider that the initiative to seek a royal pardon for Anwar, who risked losing his Permatang Pauh seat, was done by the family and not the party.

The application for a royal pardon has been submitted to the Istana Negara.

Anwar's 14-day deadline to file the application would expire at the end of today and he would have automatically been disqualified as Permatang Pauh MP.

His daughter Nurul Izzah Anwar, who is PKR vice-president, said the petition for pardon was made on the basis that the conviction failed to adhere to the principles of justice.

"The petition for a royal pardon has been sent to the Palace," she added.

Anwar's lawyer, N. Surendran, earlier said that the opposition leader had decided not to seek a royal pardon.

"We met Anwar in prison last week and he did not give any instruction to file such an application. His lawyers, too, will not file anything to that effect," he told The Malaysian Insider.

On February 10, a five-man bench led by Chief Justice Tun Arifin Zakaria found Anwar guilty of having carnal intercourse with his former aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

He committed the offence at a unit of the Desa Damansara condominium in Bukit Damansara, between 3.10pm and 4.30pm on June 26, 2008.

The Federal Constitution states that the seat will not be declared vacant until the Pardons Board has deliberated and made a decision.

Surendran also said that Anwar's legal team would continue studying the 116-page judgment before deciding to file a review application of the ruling.

"There is no time schedule to file the review but it must be done expeditiously," he said.

Former attorney-general (A-G) Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman (pic, right) said nothing stopped family members of an accused person from filing a petition to the Pardons Board.

"Usually, the accused who has exhausted his legal avenue will through his counsel file the petition," he told The Malaysian Insider.

Talib said the application for pardon would be chaired by the King and the members of the board would consist of the prime minister, the attorney-general and two others.

Talib, who served as A-G between 1980 and 1993, said the board was not bound by the opinion of the present A-G although it must consider his advice.

A lawyer said this was a "good move" as the petition did not originate from Anwar, adding that there would be no immediate by-election in Permatang Pauh.

"At the same time, Anwar could file an application to review the judgment that affirmed his conviction and sentence for sodomy," said the lawyer who spoke on the condition of anonymity. – February 24, 2015.

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