

CABINET ANNOUNCEMENT BY END OF THE WEEK?

NST- 1/12/2022

Anwar met king
on Tuesday to
present line-up,
says source

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ALL questions over who will be included in Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's unity government cabinet are expected to be answered by the end of the week.

A source close to Anwar's camp said this was following his audience with Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah on Tuesday.

It was learnt that the prime minister's audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong was to present the cabinet line-up to form the federal government as soon as possible before the king departs for an official visit abroad on Saturday.

"The cabinet line-up will probably be announced tomorrow (today). We have not received any information that it will be announced today (yesterday).

"Although everyone is speculating that Anwar has presented the (cabinet) list to the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong yesterday (Tuesday), there is still no information on the finalised list (yet)," the source told the *New Straits Times*.

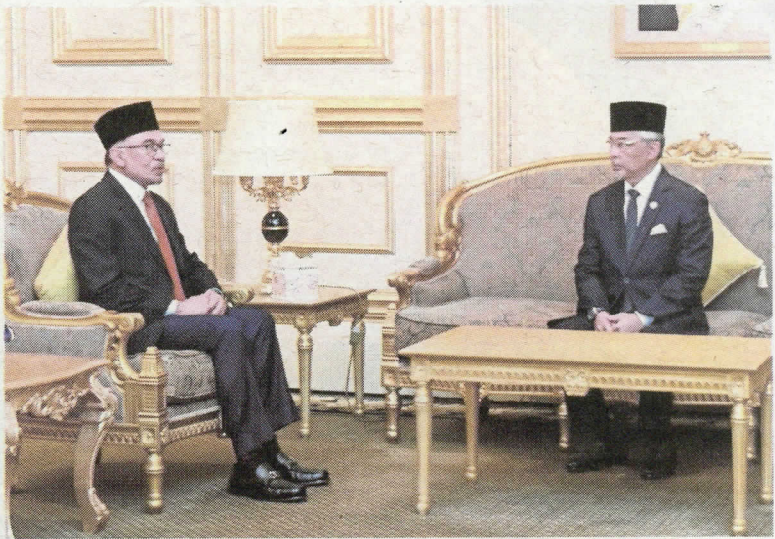
The source had also dismissed rumours that Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi would be appointed as deputy prime minister.

"We do not have any information on whether Zahid would be appointed as deputy prime minister. It will be announced soon," said the source.

Another source, meanwhile, said the announcement on the cabinet line-up should not be later than this week.

"Anwar knows the people in Pakatan Harapan and other parties, including those from Sabah and Sarawak, who he can select as the best people for the ministerial posts.

"So it shouldn't take long to have the ministers sworn in. He



Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah granting an audience to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at Istana Negara in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday. PIC

COURTESY OF ISTANA NEGARA

(Anwar) has already met the king and should have a list of people that he has screened."

Anwar, who was sworn in as prime minister on Nov 24, had announced that the unity government led by him would see a leaner cabinet.

The cabinet under the leadership of former prime minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob comprised 31 ministers and 38 deputies.

Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's cabinet, meanwhile, consisted of 31 ministers and an equal number of deputy ministers.

Anwar said under his leadership, he would propose for ministers' salaries to be reduced.

He added that the makeup of the cabinet would depend on the parties in the unity government, which would propose the names for the cabinet.

Observers had noted that Anwar would most likely appoint two deputy prime ministers, which would likely come from Barisan Nasional and Gabungan Parti Sarawak, PH's partners in the unity government.

Among the PH leaders up for cabinet posts are Parti Amanah Negara president Mohamad Sabu, DAP secretary-general Anthony Loke and PKR deputy president Rafizi Ramli.

However, sources had indicated that DAP would be taking a back seat in the cabinet makeup. It is understood that during a meeting between PH and BN leaders at the Seri Pacific Hotel on Nov 21, days before the an-

nouncement of the unity government, DAP had asked for only two cabinet posts.

BN's cabinet candidates, meanwhile, included BN deputy chairman Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Pengerang member of parliament Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said, Titiwangsa member of parliament Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani and Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

Universiti Malaya political analyst Dr Mohammad Tawfik Yaakub, in a podcast session with *Berita Harian*, said there was no issue with the names presented as long as Zahid was not included.

"I believe that if we want to instil confidence (among the people), we need to ensure that the cabinet formation is consistent until the completion of the Parliament term (of the unity government)," he said.

Tawfik said it was imperative that the people's sentiments be upheld in the formation of the government.

"We are confident in the king's mandate (to form a unity government), and that the formula was to resolve the political crisis the country was facing.

"However, how do we make sure that the ministers appointed could deliver and do their best in serving the people?

"We do not want another minister who takes advantage of the post to gain wealth and undermine the press, and the people in general, with lies."