

# Talk of Cabinet change gains pace

## Reshuffle on the cards as Anwar set to consolidate position one year in

By WONG CHUN WAI  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**PUTRAJAYA:** Talk of an impending Cabinet reshuffle by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is gaining momentum again with speculation that it could finally take place in the coming days after marking his first year in office.

While it is clear that he has to fill the Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Minister vacancy due to the death of Datuk Seri Salahuddin Ayub in July, it remains to be seen how many changes he will make to his line-up.

There have been increasing

calls for him to carry out drastic changes, including moving the ministers around or even axing a few.

Anwar was sworn in as the 10th Prime Minister on Nov 24 last year.

Recently, when the media asked him whether there would be a Cabinet reshuffle in January, he replied: "Why January, why not December?"

There has also been talk that Anwar may split up certain ministries or add an additional ministry.

The Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Ministry helmed by Nik Nazmi

Nik Ahmad has been regarded as the heaviest.

There have been calls that Anwar, who is also the Finance Minister, should appoint a Second Finance Minister.

It has been speculated that there will be a change in the Human Resources Ministry with the DAP's V. Sivakumar as the minister now.

There has been speculation that it will be split into two portfolios to ensure that the various tasks of the ministry can be better carried out.

With the Dewan Rakyat meeting, which began on Oct 9, having ended on Thursday, the belief is

that this will be the right time for Anwar to shift his attention to strengthening his line-up.

It is understood that he has also scheduled a series of meetings with leaders of the unity government.

While most analysts believed that Cabinet changes were inevitable, there was no consensus over the extent of the revamp or even when it would be done.

One analyst pointed out that Amanah will be having its annual general meeting and elections from Dec 22 to 24.

"I am not sure if Anwar wants to make any changes involving anyone from Amanah as it might

be seen as favouring someone in particular," he pointed out.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister teased the media when he was asked about the issue after performing Friday prayers at a surau in Putrajaya.

He picked 12-year-old Akmal Afif Yaseer Arafat to repeat the question posed by reporters.

"Datuk Seri, when will the Cabinet reshuffle take place?" the boy asked, cracking everyone up.

To which Anwar quipped: "You tell me when, should it be before or after 2024?"

When the boy chose the former, the PM replied that he agreed with the youngster.