

No Cabinet reshuffle, says Anwar

Several ministers also refute speculation that came from a news portal

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Prime Minister has stressed that there is no impending Cabinet reshuffle, and in jest asked reporters who it is that would like him to reorganise the line-up.

The speculation originated from a news portal and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he was unaware of any such plans.

"I was just told about the report. I did not hear about that.

"Who wants to help me reshuffle? Seriously, I didn't hear about this," said Anwar after launching the Malaysia Commercialisation Year 2024 here yesterday.

The news portal had quoted a "well-placed source" alleging that a prominent PKR minister might be reassigned or removed due to performance issues, and that a

mentri besar is set to take on a ministerial role.

When asked about the claim, Anwar responded light-heartedly: "God willing, he can be a minister after the general election."

The report also suggested that the reshuffle might occur by the end of August, with several deputy ministers potentially being promoted.

At a separate event, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Anwar did not inform him of any Cabinet reshuffle decision.

"I wasn't told by the Prime Minister. So I have no knowledge of this," he told reporters after meeting with Jeram Tekoh residents in Nenggiri, Kelantan.

Several Cabinet ministers and deputies, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said they were only aware of the alleged reshuffle

when they saw the report.

"It is news to me," one minister commented succinctly.

Officials from various ministries also indicated that no such discussions had occurred at their workplaces.

"Whenever there's a Cabinet reshuffle on the horizon, we would have an inkling of it.

"This time around, there was none," said an officer at the Prime Minister's Office.

Political analysts were similarly in the dark of any forthcoming reshuffle.

Nevertheless, Dr Azmi Hassan, a senior fellow at the Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research, thought that the speculation might be a tactic to gauge public reaction.

"My gut feeling is that this is part of a strategy to test Malaysians' sentiment. Even though the

Prime Minister denied the speculation, there must be something to it," he said, acknowledging that reshuffles in Malaysian politics often begin with speculation.

He argued that it was the right time to reshuffle the present Cabinet, as the unity government was approaching two years in power.

"We saw in the previous year that there are some ministers and deputies not performing up to par," Azmi said.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia political analyst Dr Mazlan Ah also weighed in, noting that despite Anwar's success in steering the nation into a new direction, there have been criticisms over some ministers' performance.

However, he felt that a reshuffle might not be necessary at this juncture, considering the last one

had just occurred in December last year.

The previous reshuffle expanded the number of ministries from 29 to 31 and saw several changes in ministerial positions, including the replacement of DAP's V. Sivakumar with Steven Sim as Human Resources Minister and the return of Amanah's Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad to the Health Ministry.

Umno's Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani was then also appointed as Plantation and Commodities Minister, while several ministers changed portfolios.