

TENGGU ZAFRUL

# INITIAL TALKS HELD ON PKR MEMBERSHIP

**Anwar says party has an open approach, will ensure good ties with allies continue**

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**P**KR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has confirmed that there was a discussion with Umno Supreme Council member Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz on the possibility of the latter joining PKR.

Anwar, who is also prime minister, said discussions were still in the preliminary stages.

"The principle is that we adopt an open approach, welcoming individuals who can contribute to the party, but we do so in a proper manner to maintain good relationships with other parties, including Umno and our allies.

"So far, in terms of policies and our experience in Pakatan Harapan, we neither encourage nor do we ever obstruct them.

"Instead, we respect their decisions and foster good relationships between the parties," An-

war said after attending the party's special convention here yesterday.

Anwar, who is also PH chairman, said: "We had leaders who were once the Parti Amanah Negara secretary-general, leaders from DAP who became our candidates, and some of our candidates moved in and out of DAP."

In the past, former Bukit Bintang and Wangsa Maju member of parliament Wee Choo Keong joined PKR after leaving DAP, and the party's first secretary-general, Datuk Mohd Anuar Mohd Tahir, later joined Amanah to become its first secretary-general.

Anwar's response came after rumours swirled about the possibility of Zafrul — who is investment, trade, and industry minister — leaving Umno for PKR.

On Friday, the media reported that intense negotiations were underway.

One source had claimed that if



PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking at the party's special convention in Shah Alam yesterday. PIC TAKEN FROM ANWAR IBRAHIM'S FACEBOOK

Zafrul were to join PKR, the announcement was likely to be made on Sunday during PKR's congress.

The source also claimed members from Zafrul's camp were finalising negotiations with PKR counterparts over the matter.

Another source close to the matter claimed that Zafrul was expected to play a bigger role in Selangor's administration and economic progress.

On Saturday, Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi reminded unity government parties not to poach members from each other.

Zahid, who is also deputy prime minister, said if such a situation were to happen, it would offend other parties in the government.

Zafrul, a former CIMB Group Holdings chief executive officer, is currently a second-term member of the Dewan Negara, whose

tenure as senator is set to end next year.

He was first appointed as senator on March 10, 2020, before becoming finance minister in Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's Perikatan Nasional government. He was reappointed to the same post on Aug 27, 2021, in Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob's administration.

After losing the battle for the Kuala Selangor parliamentary seat on an Umno ticket in the 15th General Election, he was appointed as senator for the second time in December 2022 before helming the Investment, Trade, and Industry Ministry in the unity government.

Under Article 45 of the Federal Constitution, a member of the Dewan Negara can hold office for only two terms, whether continuously or in different time periods.

Meanwhile, at an event in Sun-

gai Besar, Selangor, yesterday, Zafrul said he would issue a statement soon to clarify the speculation.

He also distanced himself from rumours linking him to the Selangor menteri besar post.

"I have not made any comments regarding politics involving myself. At the same time, we heard yesterday that Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari said he would remain until the end of his term."

He said this at a press conference after the KITA @ Bagan Terap Run event at SMK Bagan Terap.

When asked if he would address the matter after the 2024 PKR National Congress, Zafrul said it was unrelated to the congress.

Zafrul, in April, had resigned as Selangor Umno treasurer, citing differences with the state chapter's leadership.