

Anwar in no rush to shake up Cabinet

PETALING JAYA: Despite all the talk about a Cabinet reshuffle, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is in no rush to for a shake-up.

Even filling the existing vacancies may take some time.

The fact that Anwar had named Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi as acting Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister yesterday is a clear indication that he wants to take his time to fill the Cabinet vacancies, say Putrajaya sources.

Nanta will stand in for Datuk Ewon Benedick, who quit the government last month over Sabah's rights to 40% of its net revenue.

There are three other vacancies. Datuk Seri Rafizi Ramli and Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad resigned as the economy minister and the natural resources and environ-

mental sustainability minister respectively, after losing in the PKR elections in May.

Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz's tenure as a Senator ended yesterday and with it, his term as minister.

Anwar has already discounted a possible Cabinet reshuffle, saying he would only fill up the four ministerial vacancies.

"Several ministers are expected to serve as acting ministers," the sources said.

One source, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter, believed Anwar wants to take his time to fill those positions.

"The Prime Minister is going on leave after his trip to a Middle, Eastern country," he said.

"He would want to think and

about the whole situation."

Speculation has been rife about changes, with the ministerial vacancies, but the main attention is about who will fill Tengku Zafrul's shoes. The Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry is a key portfolio.

Universiti Sains Malaysia's political science expert Prof Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said Anwar's decision not to opt for a full Cabinet reshuffle could be his way of sending a signal of continuity and stability.

"By avoiding a major reshuffle, he is sending a message that the unity government's overall direction remains unchanged and that he wants to avoid unnecessary political turbulence.

"Filling only the four vacant posts is a more measured move, especially at a time when the

focus is on governance delivery and economic management.

"Anwar's caution reflects the need to ensure that whoever fills these roles can strengthen the government's cohesion while also bringing credibility and capability" he said.

Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research senior fellow Dr Azmi Hassan also agreed that Anwar seems to be in no hurry to fill the vacancies.

"Expectations for a Cabinet reshuffle soared after the Sabah elections, but the Prime Minister has indicated that he would only fill the existing vacancies," he said.

He said Anwar will have to balance a delicate situation due to the various positions of the stakeholders in the unity government.

"It looks like he is in no hurry," added Azmi.