



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim arriving for the Prime Minister's Department's monthly assembly in Putrajaya yesterday. He is flanked by his deputies, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (left) and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof. BERNAMA PIC

MINISTER RESIGNATIONS

ANWAR HOLDS OFF ON CABINET RESHUFFLE

PM says he cannot replace Rafizi and Nik Nazmi while they are on leave

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has yet to make a decision on a cabinet reshuffle following the resignation of two ministers from PKR who failed to defend their party posts.

He said a decision could not be made as both Economy Minister Datuk Seri Rafizi Ramli and Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, who tendered their resignations on Wednesday, are on leave.

"Not yet. They (Rafizi and Nik Nazmi) are on leave. I can't replace them while they're on leave," he said after the Prime Minister's Department's monthly assembly at Dewan Seri Endon in Pusanitapuri here.

Anwar was asked when would reshuffle the cabinet after the two ministers quit.

Pandan member of parliament

Rafizi said his resignation would take effect on June 17, and that he would use up his annual leave until then.

Rafizi's resignation came five days after he lost the PKR deputy presidency in the party election to Nurul Izzah Anwar.

Prior to the PKR election, Rafizi had pledged to resign from the cabinet if he failed to defend the post.

Setiawangsa MP Nik Nazmi said he would be on leave until his resignation takes effect on July 4. He failed to defend his PKR vice-president's post, and said he was aware that the party post played a key role in his cabinet appointment.

On Wednesday night, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi described the resignations of the two PKR ministers as an act of principle.

He said he does not interfere in the affairs of other parties but he respected the decision of his cabinet colleagues.

"However, as cabinet colleagues, I feel they have contributed effectively.

"They collectively supported all decisions by the cabinet, and their absence may be filled by candidates from PKR, at the discretion of (the prime minister)," he said.

Nik Nazmi was the only incumbent PKR vice-president who

failed to retain the position.

Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari, Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Aminuddin Harun and Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Chang Lih Kang were re-elected.

Nik Nazmi's spot was taken by Deputy Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Datuk Seri R. Ramanan.

In April, Nik Nazmi also lost the contest for the PKR Setiawangsa division chief post to actor, director and comedian Datuk Afdlin Shauki.

On whether the two ministerial posts might be filled by Barisan Nasional, Zahid said such decisions are at the discretion of the prime minister.

"The power (to appoint cabinet members) lies fully with the prime minister. Leaders come and go, and so do ministers.

"God willing, Anwar will choose the best candidates among PKR leaders to join the cabinet (to replace Rafizi and Nik Nazmi)," he said.

Zahid, who is also BN chairman and Umno president, declined to comment on allegations that several PKR MPs, including Rafizi and Nik Nazmi, had withdrawn their support for Anwar.

"I think it's best not to entertain rumours," said the Bagan Datuk MP.