

Anwar coy on Cabinet reshuffle amid vacant key posts

NAIROBI: If there are plans to reshuffle the Cabinet, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is keeping that decision close to his chest.

The Prime Minister was non-committal when asked about the possibility of a Cabinet reshuffle.

"Is there going to be a reshuffle? Does it involve the Prime Minister?" he asked when reporters queried him on the matter.

"I am thinking. Maybe at the right time (there will be a Cabinet reshuffle)," he said at the end of his visit to Kenya.

Anwar arrived in Malaysia yesterday.

He also did not want to disclose if he has plans for Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz, whose senatorship tenure

ends on Dec 2.

As this is his second term as senator, Tengku Zafrul is not eligible for a new term in the Senate.

Talk is that changes in the Cabinet are impending, especially since there will be four vacancies in ministerial posts soon.

Aside from the vacancy in Tengku Zafrul's post, Anwar has not filled the vacancies in the Economy, and Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability ministers' portfolios.

Datuk Seri Rafizi Ramli and Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad resigned as the Economy Minister and the Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister, respectively, in May.

They left their posts following their defeats in the last PKR

party elections.

Datuk Ewon Benedick resigned as Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister earlier this month, stating that he would quit if Putrajaya decided to appeal the High Court ruling affirming Sabah's rights to 40% of net revenue derived from the state.

On a separate matter, Anwar said Thailand has reassured Malaysia that accusations of interference concerning its border issues with Cambodia are unfounded.

He added that he received a call from Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul on Monday reaffirming Malaysia's role in facilitating talks between the two neighbouring countries.

"Since he knows the facts,

Anutin thought the criticisms were unfair. He said as far as he is concerned, (Malaysia's) role is to facilitate talks," he said.

According to reports, protesters had gathered in front of the Malaysian embassy in Bangkok on Saturday to demand that Anwar stop "interfering" in Thailand's handling of its border dispute with Cambodia.

The protesters also demanded that Anwar refrain from pressuring Thailand to negotiate with Cambodia over disputed border areas.

Anwar said it was appalling that some groups in Malaysia were excited to see the country being criticised and accused.

"Instead of supporting and welcoming Malaysia's role, they want

the country to fail," he added.

He said critics were of the assumption that this was one individual's role, when in fact many parties were involved in facilitating talks between Thailand and Cambodia.

"It is not a matter of (just) Anwar. The Foreign and Defence ministries are involved, as well as the Chief of Armed Forces.

"It is their work and preparations on the part of Malaysia that made things easier to facilitate," he added.

On Oct 26, Anutin and Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet signed a peace deal, known as the KL Peace Accord, on the sidelines of the 47th Asean Summit, witnessed by Anwar and US President Donald Trump.