

Give Sabah a cut of GST proceeds, says MP
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Sabah DAP has called on the federal government to let Sabah in on the proceeds of the controversial goods and services tax, as part of its proposal to return fiscal power to the state.

Sabah DAP chief and Kota Kinabalu MP Jimmy Wong said by having money in its coffers, Sabah would be able to act autonomously on urgent issues plaguing the state, including rampant poverty.

“Now, the national budget is about 70 times bigger than Sabah’s budget. Under this framework, Sabah will highly rely on federal allocation, without autonomy to decide on their own policies.

“For instance, the Kota Kinabalu City Council has once said it has no allocation from federal to build a multi-level car park building.

“Although state government and municipal councils can do their own planning, but without fiscal power, the progress is slow and regressive,” Wong (right) said in a statement.

He said that this must go beyond raising allocations for the state, by decentralising the hold on funds in favour of federation members.

Minister: Give us the money directly

This was in tune with Sabah’s Rural Development Minister Radin Malleh, who called on the federal government to give Sabah its allocations directly, instead of through development projects.

Radin said this could cut wastage when the federal government embarks on redundant projects already undertaken by the state.

“The move will not only standardise the projects, but will make it easier for the relevant ministries in their inspections and reviews,” he said.

Radin (right), who is also PBS vice-president, also urged the federal government allocate more to Sabah in Budget 2015, given its size.

He said that the funds could be used to eradicate rural poverty and roll out basic amenities, such as water, electricity and roads to the rural areas.

Meanwhile, Wong urged the government to eliminate the cabotage policy, which has

caused higher prices of goods and services in East Malaysia.

Although the government has allocated RM1 billion to address price inequities, Wong said, the measures have not been effective.

“I hope Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak can explain why, despite many allocations being allocated under the price standardisation programme, it is not helping.

“Also, I would like to remind Najib that setting up more Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia is actually not helping but wasting the money,” Wong added.

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