

PM denies 'cancelling' RM4.2m funds for Kg Sim-Sim, says allocation restored

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SABAH POLLS | Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin today denied "cancelling" RM4.2 million in allocations for bridge repair works in Kampung Sim-Sim, Sandakan, as previously alleged by the DAP.

In his speech at the Kampung Sim-Sim futsal court, Muhyiddin said he had never instructed for the funds, said to be approved by former finance minister Lim Guan Eng, to be cancelled.

"They said I cancelled the RM4.2 million allocation when I took over (the government).

"I never asked them to withdraw," said Muhyiddin at the end of his speech to over 400 supporters of PN's N56 Tanjong Papat candidate Ken Yong Chie Man and BN's N55 Elopura candidate Chan Boon Tian.

At the same time, Muhyiddin also announced the Prime Minister's Department Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU) had recently approved a request to "return" the RM4.2 million allocation for Kampung Sim-Sim, one of nine voting districts in Tanjong Papat.

"The amount RM4.2 million to repair 24 bridges in Kampung Sim-Sim have been approved," he said to cheers from the crowd.

He subsequently handed over the approval letter dated Sept 18, signed by ICU's director-general Nor Azri Zulfakar, to Sandakan Fishermen Association chairperson Shaiful Bahari Muin.

When met after the function, Shaiful Bahari told Malaysiakini he had written to the ICU to apply for the allocation to be returned.

"The allocation was not cancelled, but it was only postponed.

"It was postponed temporarily. This matter had been twisted," he claimed.

According to the approval letter, the allocation would be channelled to the Sandakan Municipal Council via the Sabah Development Office.

DAP leaders and candidates campaigning across Sandakan had accused the PN government of cancelling infrastructure projects approved by Harapan, including repair works at 24 "Jambatan" in Kampung Sim-Sim.

Sandakan MP Vivian Wong previously said that she had applied and received approval for the RM4.2 million allocation after Lim's visit to Kampung Sim-Sim during her own by-election campaign trail last May.

Together with DAP's Tanjong Papat incumbent Frankie Poon, Wong said they waited for the allocations to reach Sabah, up until the change in federal government and start of the movement control order enforced in March.

Wong also said the Sandakan Municipal Council had last month responded to her queries on the fund's status, informing that it has been "cancelled" without any reasons.

Poon, who is defending his Tanjong Papat seat against PN's Yong and four others, had said that the issue of repairs in Kg Sim-Sim was a constant problem as the bridges in the floating village were not built to last.

In an immediate response, Wong, Poon and DAP's Elopura incumbent assemblyperson Calvin Chong welcomed Muhyiddin's announcement, describing

it as an "early victory" for Sabahans ahead of polling day on Saturday.

At the same time, the trio reminded Muhyiddin that Lim had also approved other allocations in Kampung Sim-Sim, including RM4 million to install a new sewage system.

Across the larger Sandakan area, they also cited RM1 million in approved allocations to upgrade the Jalan Sibuga/Jalan Utara junction opposite SK St Monica.

"Will he (Muhyiddin) return all the allocations to Kampung Sim-Sim residents and Sandakan voters?" they asked, adding this was on top of a more significant promise by Putrajaya to return 20 percent oil royalty payment for all Sabahans.

"The return of this RM4.2 million to Kampung Sim-Sim villagers is evidence that there is no need for Sabah (state government) to be aligned with the federal government.

"If Sabahans are united and dare to fight for our rights, the federal government will be 'forced' to bow to the people because the real power is in our hands," they stressed.

Muhyiddin, in his speeches across the state, had reiterated the importance for Sabahans to elect a PN-led state government, hinting it would facilitate distribution of additional assistance beyond what is already provided for under the federal constitution.

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