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PM CHAIRS FIRST MA63 CABINET COMMITTEE MEETING

Review of agreement is aimed at restoring status of Sabah, Sarawak as equal partners in Malaysia

KUCHING

PRIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad chaired the first special cabinet steering committee for a review of the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) in Putrajaya yesterday.

The review is aimed at restoring the status of Sabah and Sarawak as equal partners in Malaysia.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Liew Vui Keong, in a statement, said Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal and his counterpart in Sarawak, Datuk Abang Johari Abang Openg, were among those who attended the historic meeting.

"Among the issues brought up were a proposal to restore autonomy to the governments of Sabah and Sarawak in mat-

ters such as finance, oil exploration, mining and gas, legislation, land and revenue from land, federal and state works, maritime and fisheries, human resources and state public services.

"Apart from that, amendments to Article 1(2) of the Federal Constitution, to restore the clauses which existed prior to 1976, were also discussed," he said.

Liew said this was the firm basis to strengthen the relationship between Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia, in line with what was contained in the Constitution, MA63 and Chapter 3, Annexes A and B of the Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee, 1962.

Prior to the meeting, the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department had hosted a series of coordinating meetings with representatives of the Sabah and Sarawak governments, the Attorney-General's Chambers, Finance Ministry, Economic Affairs Ministry and the Public Service Department.

Among those who attended yesterday's meeting were Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng, Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali, Works Minister Baru Bian, Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, Transport Minister An-

thony Loke, Communications and Multimedia Minister Gobind Singh Deo; International Trade Minister Datuk Darell Leiking and Liew. The delegation from Sabah included its attorney-general Datuk Zaleha Rose Pandin, and former attorney-general Datuk Stephen Foo, while the delegation from Sarawak included its Assistant Law, State-Federal Relations and Project Monitoring Minister Sharifah Hasidah Sayeed Aman Ghazali and Deputy State Speaker Datuk Gerawat Gala.

Present were Attorney-General Tommy Thomas, Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak Datuk David Wong and constitutional law expert Profesor Datuk Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi.

"This committee will meet every two months and has been given six months from today (yesterday) to come up with a final report," said Liew. **Bernama**

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