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# Federal projects in Sarawak will proceed, says Dr M

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PRIME Minister (PM) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the federal projects in Sarawak will proceed regardless of the government of the state.

He said, as far as the federal government is concerned, Sarawak is part of Malaysia and the state's development is Putrajaya's responsibility.

"We would, of course, prefer a government that is friendly, that is of the same party as the federal (Pakatan Harapan) government.

"But whether it is a different or same government, federal projects in Sarawak will go on," he told reporters after attending a closed door briefing on the progress of the federal development projects in Sarawak yesterday.

Asked on the Gabungan Parti Sarawak state government's offer of RM1 billion to

be used to rebuild dilapidated schools in the state, he said it was a loan.

"I think they (state government) wanted to lend it to us, but the state government also owes us money.

"We would just prefer if they just pay the money they are owing us. They have a lot of money and the budget for Sarawak is the biggest in Malaysia, RM11 billion (next year)," he said.

Dr Mahathir also hoped the Sarawak government would not be too demanding with regard to oil royalty to the state.

Sarawak has demanded that the oil royalty of 5% from the federal government be increased to 20% as part of state special rights as enshrined under the Malaysia Agreement 1963.

On the rebuilding and upgrading of 116 dilapidated

schools involving an allocation of RM443.5 million statewide this year, he said it takes slightly longer to get the building materials.

So far, 77 such schools have been completed and 39 are in various phases of implementation using the industrialised building system.

During the briefing by Sarawak federal secretary Datuk Mansor Man, the PM also heard that RM14 billion is allocated to the state under the 11th Malaysia Plan.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived in the oil and gas town on Saturday evening to launch the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia Sarawak, later departed for the federal capital from the Bintulu Airport.

He was accompanied by his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali. — *Bernama*