

# PM: Support for MA63 amendments shows unity

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➤ 'Approval marks new history for country, paving way for Sabah, Sarawak to enjoy benefits and advantages'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The passing of the Bill with more than a two-thirds majority to amend the Federal Constitution on the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) in the Dewan Rakyat on Tuesday is proof of the nation's spirit of unity in diversity, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

He said the Bill's approval marked a new history for the country and expressed hope that Keluarga Malaysia in Sabah and Sarawak could enjoy all the benefits and advantages.

"The proposed constitutional amendment on the definition of states in the Federation involving Sabah and Sarawak related to MA63 received the approval of backbenchers and opposition members of Parliament (MP).

"Congratulations and appreciation are in order for the MP who expressed support for the Bill," said Ismail Sabri through a post on his official Facebook page yesterday.

On Tuesday, the Dewan Rakyat passed the Bill to amend the Federal Constitution related to MA63 to give recognition to the claims and

special status of Sabah and Sarawak when they joined Malaya to form the Federation of Malaysia.

A total of 200 MP voted in favour of the Bill on the second reading, while 20 others were absent. On the third reading, 199 MP voted in favour, while 21 others were absent.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Parliament and Law) Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said the amendment would see MA63 placed on par with the Federation of Malaya Agreement 1948 and the Federation of Malaya Independence Act 1957.

Wan Junaidi added that by recognising MA63 in the Constitution, the government could now refer to all the promises made in 1963 in detail and stated in the Intergovernmental Committee Report, which is an in-depth study of the Cobbold Commission Report on Sabah and Sarawak's claims.

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Hajiji Noor said

the passing of the Federal Constitution Amendment 2021 Bill was momentous and will pave the way for full restoration of MA63.

"It is a significant moment in our country's history. We have been persistent about this and the MA63 Special Council chaired by the prime minister has been forthcoming on requests submitted by Sabah and Sarawak," he said in a statement yesterday.

Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abang Johari Abang Openg yesterday also expressed appreciation over the passing of the constitutional amendment.

Abang Johari said he was thankful for the large turnout of MP who voted in favour of the Bill, which carried amendments to strengthen the position of Sabah and Sarawak in the Federation, Bernama reported.

"This is the spirit that we, especially in Sarawak, and perhaps our friends in Sabah, want in the Federal Constitution," he said after handing Bumiputra Communal Reserve Gazette documents and land title deeds to recipients in Roban Selatan in Kuching.

In his speech earlier, he said the passing of the Bill was part of efforts taken by Gabungan Parti Sarawak, which he chairs, to safeguard the people's rights according to laws and as stipulated in MA63.