



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking at a press conference after chairing a cabinet meeting in Putrajaya yesterday. PIC BY ASWADI ALIAS

## PM's ANNOUNCEMENTS

# GOVERNMENT REFORM AGENDA ON TRACK

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Measures include granting Sabah full regulatory control of gas supply, addressing MA63 and disbanding NRC

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**T**HE government continued its slew of reforms yesterday, with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announcing more measures after chairing a cabinet meeting.

Announcing good news for Sabah and its people, he said the cabinet had agreed to transfer full regulatory control of gas supply to the state government.

However, he said, he would first seek the consent of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Bilal Shah. As such, the date of implementation of the move would be announced later.

"The power to decide (gas) prices was previously in the hands of the federal government and Petronas, but with this transfer of (autonomous) power, it will be in the hands of the Sabah government."

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the matter was decided as part of the government's efforts to uphold the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63).

The move, he said, was similar to the autonomy granted to Sarawak in March 2018 when the state government assumed full regulatory authority of the upstream and downstream aspects of the state's oil and gas industry.

Anwar said after the reassignment of power, the Sabah government could continue with negotiations on gas supply in the state without having to wait for the federal administration.

On MA63, Anwar said the MA63 Committee, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, had a month to resolve issues involving the restoration of the rights of Sabah and Sarawak.

"The deadline for this is in early January, and we will make several announcements on the issues that have been resolved.

"However, there may be several items involving the law and legislation that would need to wait until (they can be discussed in) Parliament."

Another measure agreed to by the cabinet yesterday was the disbandment of the National Recovery Council (NRC).

Anwar said the council, established on July 21 last year, had "overlapping" responsibilities.

"We have dissolved the NRC. It is an overlap and the position was

created to fulfil the needs at the time."

The NRC comprises senior ministers, ministers, senior government officials, opposition party representatives and experts in economic, social and health matters.

Anwar also said the operations of the Governance, Integrity and Anti-Corruption Centre was being studied to see if there were overlapping roles.

He also said the cost of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) has been reduced by RM11.01 billion from the 2016 cost of RM85.97 billion.

He said the cost was brought down to RM74.96 billion, despite the additional budget application for the new ECRL route.

"We have decided to continue with this project and will not make many changes because this will delay implementation."

The 665km ECRL project involves alignments in Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang and Selangor, and is designed to be free from disruption by floods. It will see 20 stations connecting cities, towns and industrial parks, as well as improve public transport in rural areas. Construction is scheduled to be completed by December 2026.

On another matter, Anwar stressed that the speed of doing business must be improved.

"The way government machinery and departments manage applications for business needs to be fast and efficient."