

PM: Sabah, Sarawak can approve projects worth RM50m or less

PUTRAJAYA: Sabah and Sarawak will have the authority to approve any development project worth RM50 million or less without needing approval from the federal government.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said such projects would not need to go through the federal government and could be decided by the state governments.

"There are Public Works Departments in Sabah and Sarawak, but the final say (for project approvals) is mostly made in Putrajaya. Even though there is a large allocation, it can't be (easily) given because of bureaucracy, and they have to refer to the federal government.

"Therefore, the Finance Ministry has agreed to allow any project valued at RM50 million or less to be decided by the Sabah and Sarawak governments, complying with financial regulations.

"The decision can be made in Kuching or Kota Kinabalu without delay," he said after a cabinet meeting here yesterday.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said this was one of the decisions made to uphold the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63),

apart from the announcement on the transfer of regulatory control over gas supply to Sabah in December last year.

He said the power transfer would be finalised in the Sabah state assembly early next month after obtaining the consent of the king.

He added that he would also chair the MA63 action council, with the meeting likely to be held in Kuching by the end of this month.

The meeting, he said, would be attended by Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Abang Openg and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor.

"The working committee chaired by (Deputy Prime Minister and Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri) Fadillah (Yusof) will look into the allocation for Sabah and Sarawak based on Article 112D of the agreement, which stipulates that reasonable provision should be given to Sabah and Sarawak.

"The allocation should be reviewed every five years, but this has not been happening. We will revive this and try to finalise it as soon as possible in my meeting with Abang Johari and Hajiji."



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking at a press conference following a cabinet meeting in Putrajaya yesterday. With him are his deputies, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof. PIC BY MOHD FADHLI HAMZAH