

Hajiji gets Anwar's support to remain as CM

> We will give room to the chief minister to hold talks and find the best formula for the good of Sabah, says PM

KOTA KINABALU: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has given his blessings to Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor to remain as Sabah chief minister.

Anwar said he also wants the Sabah government to remain strong under Hajiji's leadership.

"We will give room to the chief minister to hold discussions and find the best formula for the good of Sabah."

He was speaking after a 40-minute discussion with Hajiji and representatives of the state

government bloc at the chief minister's official residence in Sri Gaya on Monday night. Present was Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Anwar thanked Hajiji and all Sabah elected representatives present at the meeting for their views, which he said were for the good of the state.

Anwar went on to say that the Sabah government had an important agenda to pursue, namely the tabling of a bill in the Sabah assembly to hand over power

to regulate gas supply, in an effort to restore the state's rights.

"An important bill (will be tabled) to restore Sabah's rights that I presented to the Cabinet. This is a big change, and to me, a priority."

Anwar announced on Dec 21 that the federal government had agreed to hand over the gas supply regulatory power in Sabah to the state government, and that the matter was agreed upon as part of the federal government's effort to honour the Malaysia Agreement 1963.

He said the solution to the current political uncertainty in Sabah lies in the hands of state leaders themselves.

"The current situation is improving. Zahid and I are looking for the best solution for Sabah, and the decision is to be made by Sabah

leaders themselves. We can only provide advice."

He and Ahmad Zahid, who is BN chairman, met earlier with several state leaders, including Sabah BN chief Datuk Seri Bung Moktar Radin at a hotel here, Bernama reported.

Last Friday, Bung Moktar announced that Sabah Umno and BN had retracted their support for Hajiji due to loss of confidence in his position as chief minister and over the breach of an agreement between BN and PN.

The following day, however, five BN assemblymen stated their support for Hajiji and are among the 44 assemblymen who Hajiji claims are supporting him to remain as CM and head of the state government.

The Sabah state assembly has 79 assemblymen, including six appointed members.