

# Decades-old issue to be resolved

## This generation is duty-bound to implement MA63, says Anwar

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**KOTA KINABALU:** It is the responsibility of the current generation to implement what was spelt out in the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said as the MA63 was an agreement and pledge signed by the country's previous leaders to establish a country called Malaysia, the present generation is duty-bound to implement it faithfully and sincerely.

"I am not worried (about MA63) because since taking over the government, this unity government has been giving priority to, among other things, resolving problems that have plagued the country for decades.

"In only six months (after taking over government), with the cooperation of Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor and state and federal teams, I have asked Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof to chair the proceedings, and almost all the problems have been amicably settled," he was quoted by Bernama.

Anwar was addressing the crowd at the closing ceremony of Kaamatan at Dewan Hongkod Koisaaan, Kadazandusun Cultural Association (KDCA) yesterday.

He said he was determined to attend the closing of the state's Kaamatan festival to lead by



**Festive atmosphere:** Anwar with Juhar beside him and (from left to right) Hajiji, Jeffrey and Pairin participating in a symbolic mongomot (padi harvesting) ritual.

example that every festival celebrated by any race must be respected.

"I told Hajiji that I wished to attend to show that the unity government is earnest in its promise to the people that this is a new phase for Malaysia.

"Kaamatan is a special celebration, not only for the Kadazan-

dusun Murut Rungus communities but for all Malaysians in Sabah and throughout the nation.

"This is a people's event. Our aim in the Malaysia Madam (government) is to turn Sabah and Malaysia into superior places that are strong in education and economy (among others), while remaining faithful to cultural and traditional roots.

The closing of Kaamatan, or the Harvest Festival, was officiated by Sabah Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Juhar Mahiruddin in a grand colourful ceremony attended by some 5,000 people.

Besides Hajiji, also present were KDCA president and Huguan Siou (paramount leader of the Kadazandusun community) Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan, Deputy Chief Minister and KDCA deputy president Datuk Seri Dr Jeffrey Kitingan, state ministers and others.

Anwar also gave his assurances that the Federal Government would help resolve basic infrastructure issues in Sabah, adding that Hajiji had asked Putrajaya for assistance in addressing these problems.

"I will be holding a high-level

meeting tomorrow morning (today) to resolve the water issue with the state government.

"The allocation for road repairs (from the Federal Government) was also the highest for Sabah. We have asked for immediate action to implement the Pan Borneo Highway project and (repair) damaged roads," he said.

Anwar also praised Hajiji for being a chief minister who cared about development.

"As soon as I arrived he (Hajiji) was discussing projects for the people.

"He was asking if there were additional projects for Sabahans, not like others who met me asking if there were projects for them," he said.

During a programme at the Lok Kawi army camp here, Anwar also announced that the Federal Government had agreed to approve the extension of the Regional Incentive Payment (BIW) for the armed forces starting July 1.

This is to replace the Sabah and Sarawak Incentive Payment (BISS) and the Peninsula Malaysia Incentive Payment (BISM).

He said this would involve an additional RM87.8mil in annual allocation for the armed forces and would benefit some 33,586 soldiers.