

PM doing fine job with Sarawak, says expert

KUCHING: The decision by Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS) chairman Tan Sri Abang Johari Abang Openg to cooperate with "political opponent" Pakatan Harapan (PH) to form the federal government after the 15th general election in November last year caught most Sarawakians by surprise, and some GPS leaders were sceptical about it.

However, after a year being in power, the unity government led by PH chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim proved the two opposing coalitions were more than able to work together for the benefit of the people, including Sarawakians, Bernama reported.

"I think Anwar has been very highly committed to fulfilling the aspirations and needs of Sarawakians," said National Council of Professors senior fellow Datuk Dr Jeniri Amir yesterday.

Jeniri also listed out several major decisions which Anwar made within a year of being the nation's 10th prime minister that won the

> Successful implementation of development initiatives highlights commitment to fulfil aspirations of state residents

approval of the Sarawak people.

"A good example is the RM300 million special interim grant given to Sarawak (to comply with the Malaysia Agreement 1963), which I think was revised almost 19 times (by the Anwar-led government)."

Jeniri said the decision to allow the Sarawak and Sabah governments to implement federal projects worth RM50 million and below was also seen as a sincere move and commitment of the federal government to accelerate the completion of the projects.

"Anwar realised the importance of Sabah and Sarawak in the unity government, and the importance to boost Sabah and Sarawak's

development. Definitely, this will cut all the red tape," he said.

He also noted the prime minister's frequent trips to Sarawak last year reflected Anwar's determination to understand the people's aspirations and problems.

Meanwhile, Universiti Malaya's centre for studies of democracy and elections sociopolitical analyst Assoc Prof Dr Awang Azman Awang Pawi said Anwar's decision to appoint a deputy prime minister (DPM) from Sarawak was unprecedented

"A DPM from Sarawak means benefits and approaches from Sarawak's perspective, which will be closer, better understood and

more directly involved in the prime minister's administration, unlike before," he said.

Awang Azman said Anwar's openness to listen and address requests by Sarawakians and Sabahans in their letters and petitions to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Mustafa Billah Shah during His Majesty's tour of the two states, were also proven when each of the letters and petitions were dealt accordingly.

He said Anwar had also shown his full confidence in Sarawak under the leadership of Abang Johari and Sabah under Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Nor by allowing the two states to implement federal projects worth RM50 million and below.

"This never happened during any of the previous governments.

"This kind of confidence clearly ensures immediate decisions can be made at the state level without waiting for the green light from the federal government," he said.