



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor at the launch of the first phase of the Estee Enterprise Sabah Sdn Bhd's project at the Sipitang Oil and Gas Industrial Park yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

13th MALAYSIA PLAN

'13MP PROJECTS GUIDED BY STATES' NEEDS'

Federal govt always considers requests of all states based on trust, says PM

PENAMPANG

THE federal government always considers the needs and requests of all states in determining the priority of projects under the 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP).

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the priority could not be determined solely by the federal government and, instead, was decided jointly with the state governments.

Citing Sabah, Anwar said in almost every working visit to the state, federal and state leaders or officials always met to discuss the state's needs.

"Previously there were requests which were vetted by federal ministries... now no more, (as) requests are made directly (at meetings) chaired by the prime minister, there is the chief minister, there are state ministers.

"We listen and pay attention directly. Frankly, this only happens because of uniformity, (as well as) good and close relationships due to mutual trust," he said at Sabah's Kaamatan Festival celebration here yesterday at Dewan Hongkod Koisaan.

Present were Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, Deputy Chief Minister II Datuk Seri Dr Joachim Gunsalam and Kadazandusun Cultural Associa-

tion president Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan.

Anwar also expressed his gratitude to Hajiji and the Sabah government for their openness to cooperating with the federal government to develop Sabah.

He said the spirit to strengthen Sabah must be nurtured through the strong unity between the federal and state governments within the framework of the federation.

Anwar said raising issues that could erode that good relationship for political mileage, especially ahead of the Sabah election, should not be done.

He said the federal government and the states, particularly Sabah and Sarawak, were very diverse and this must be seen as a strength.

He said when Malaysia was established, *Bersekutu Bertambah Mutu* (Unity is Strength) was chosen as the national motto to illustrate the importance of togetherness in diversity in strengthening the country.

"Diversity can also be destructive, where there are countries in this world which initially embraced a multiracial and multi-religious society, but later experienced hostility between races, religions and regions.

"Which nation can be successful like that as everything will end up in ruins. So, no matter how difficult it is, any sensible leader in a political campaign for the post of state assemblyman or member of parliament, must remember never to sacrifice the state or country," he said.

Anwar's remarks yesterday echoed his speech to Sabah

Pakatan Harapan leaders on Thursday, when he emphasised the need for stronger federal-state relations with Sabah, built on mutual trust and cooperation, to enhance development and protect the welfare of its people.

He urged Sabah to follow Sarawak's example, where closer federal-state collaboration has yielded tangible benefits.

He reiterated Putrajaya's commitment to working with Sabah's leadership on governance and development, ensuring that the state's interests and wellbeing remained a priority.

"The federal government has long prioritised Sabah's needs. This isn't about state elections, it's about responsibility," he said.

Anwar highlighted his administration's commitment to upholding the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) through a committee chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, alongside ministers from Sabah and Sarawak.

He said nine longstanding MA63 issues had been resolved, and even complex matters such as oil affairs had been addressed.

"We propose the same principle so that assured revenue for Sabah can be achieved. Governance must be prioritised, not personal wealth," he said.

Anwar underscored the federal government's success in repelling the Sulu group's claim, affirming its commitment to protecting Sabah's sovereignty.

"We gave our full commitment in the cabinet meeting, and even at the recent Asean summit, ensuring Sabah's issues remain a priority," he said. **Bernama**