

## SABAH GENERAL ELECTION

# Revenue decision boosts GRS, Anwar, say analysts

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The federal government's decision not to appeal the High Court's recognition of Sabah's 40 per cent entitlement has given a political boost to the ruling Gabungan Rakyat Sabah (GRS) ahead of the state election, analysts said.

Analysts described the move as a "milestone" that creates a "feel-good effect" for voters, signalling that the federal government is listening to Sabah's demands.

Universiti Sains Malaysia's Professor Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said the decision by the Attorney-General's Chambers represented a critical moment in Sabah's fight for its constitutional rights.

"It creates a feel-good effect for Sabahans because the 40 per cent revenue issue touches on the state's dignity and rights.

"Ahead of the Sabah election, this can be seen as a sign that the federal government is finally listening to Sabahans, easing the perception that Kuala Lumpur often ignores the state's entitlements," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Sivamurugan said the move offered a "win-win narrative".

"This decision could give a moral boost to GRS, especially Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, as it reflects effective negotiation and good relations between the state and federal governments.

"At the same time, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim also benefits — being seen as a leader who honours the spirit of the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63)."

However, Sivamurugan said that the political advantage would depend on GRS ability to deliver follow-up measures, particularly in revenue distribution and implementation at the state level.

"While the general sentiment is positive, there is still a risk of scepticism.

"Some may question whether the funds will reach the people or if this is merely a political announcement."

Associate Professor Dr Syaza Shukri — a political analyst at the



Professor Dr Sivamurugan Pandian

International Islamic University Malaysia and a visiting fellow at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute — said the decision created a "feel-good effect" and shielded the federal government from criticism.

"It could boost GRS as the bridge between the federal and state governments.

"With its cooperation with Pakatan Harapan in the Sabah election, it demonstrates that local parties can achieve change through negotiation and partnership with the federal government."

Syaza added that the risks were twofold: the decision could be seen as a political move aimed at influencing voters, and people might question whether the benefits would be implemented effectively. "It can still be used against the ruling coalition. Voters might question whether people would benefit from any trickle-down effect."