

'Ewon's resignation is premature'

Anwar: Govt to decide today on possible appeal of ruling on Sabah revenue issue

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TAWAU: Describing Datuk Ewon Benedick's move to resign from the Cabinet as premature, the Prime Minister says the Federal Government will decide today whether to appeal the High Court ruling on Sabah's 40% revenue entitlement.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the Cabinet must hear the Attorney General's advice before making any move.

He also said the meeting's agenda is to discuss this matter and not about a Cabinet reshuffle.

"I think it is too early for him to

make a decision.

"But I understand how he feels pressured by this situation," Anwar said at the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation's Digital Tour programme.

Ewon tendered his resignation as Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development Minister yesterday.

"I have also started to clear my remaining leave today onwards," he said in his Facebook page.

Anwar said the judgment was issued only recently and the government needed to follow the legal process.

"The judgment only came three days ago. We can see there are strengths and there are weak-

nesses. Read it first. Listen to the call of the nation. And then we make a decision," he added.

Anwar questioned the confusion over the matter, saying the Federal Government had already acted on key components of the 40% entitlement.

"What is the problem with the appeal? Have we given the 40%? Yes, we have. Have we negotiated? Yes, we have negotiated. This government negotiates," he said.

The Prime Minister said his personal view was that not appealing was also acceptable, but the government had to consider any constitutional implications highlight-

ed by the Attorney General.

"Appeal or not appeal, wait until tomorrow. For me, not appealing is also okay. But if the Attorney General says that not appealing will affect the position of the Federal Constitution, then we have to weigh that," he said.

He said negotiations with Sabah would only continue after the state election.

"Negotiations cannot happen now because the Sabah government is a caretaker government until the election.

"This country follows the law. There is a process. We listen to the court first, and then we decide," he said.

The Prime Minister pointed out that his administration had allocated larger provisions to Sabah compared to previous governments.

He said Sabah now receives an annual allocation of RM17bil, compared with revenue collected by the Federal Government in the state, which amounts to about RM10bil a year.

"As Prime Minister, I increased special allocations to Sabah to RM600mil. But this is not final; the state government has requested additional funds, and in the upcoming meeting, we will negotiate how much more can be allocated," he said.