

Govt to decide on appeal against 40% revenue ruling today



Anwar being greeted by hospital staff at the launch of Tawau Hospital's new block yesterday. - **BERNAMAPIC**

TAWAU: The federal government will decide at a special Cabinet meeting today whether to appeal the High Court ruling that Sabah is entitled to 40% of the revenue collected in the state, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the government would first seek advice from the attorney-general before deciding on its next step.

"For me, it is acceptable even if we choose not to appeal.

"But the final decision will be made after consulting all Cabinet members," he said during the Malaysia Digital roadshow yesterday.

Anwar also acknowledged shortcomings and limitations in the matter but urged all parties to understand the situation.

"The court has directed us to negotiate, and I said that is acceptable. We will negotiate. But as of today, who do we negotiate with?"

"The Sabah government is currently a caretaker government.

After the state election on Nov 29 and the formation of a new government, I will instruct that negotiations begin immediately."

Also present at the event were Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and Sabah Finance Minister Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun.

Anwar said his administration has allocated larger provisions to Sabah compared with previous governments.

He said Sabah now receives an annual allocation of RM17 billion while federal revenue collected in the state amounts to about RM10 billion a year.

"As prime minister, I raised special allocations to Sabah by RM600 million. 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."

"If the Opposition keeps criticising us, I want to ask: 'What exactly are you angry about? Under, the previous government, only

RM56 million was allocated. We increased it to RM600 million and yet you are still unhappy."

Anwar said the Madani government's policies have always upheld fairness for all states, including a firm commitment to ensuring that Sabah continues to receive priority in the national development agenda.

He said it was inappropriate for any party to express anger as the Madani government has shown a stronger and more consistent commitment to safeguarding Sabah's rights as enshrined in the Malaysia Agreement 1963.

Separately, Anwar confirmed that today's special Cabinet meeting would not discuss a much-rumoured Cabinet reshuffle.

On the resignation of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development Minister Datuk Ewon Benedick, he described the move as premature, adding that the government is still reviewing various aspects related to Sabah's 40% revenue issue. - **Bernama**