

Najib Expected To Make Much-awaited Announcement On RCI In Sabah Next Week
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KOTA KINABALU, Feb 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is expected to make the much-awaited announcement with regard to the federal cabinet's decision on the proposed setting up of the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on illegal immigrants in Sabah during his next visit to the state, slated for two days beginning on Feb 16.

Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili said the recent cabinet meeting discussed in detail the issue of the proposed RCI, one of the hotly debated issues in Sabah, for both the state Barisan Nasional (BN) component party leaders and the opposition.

"The Prime Minister will make the necessary announcement as soon as possible," he told reporters after attending a briefing on the progress of the Sabah Development Corridor at the Sabah Economic Development and Investment Authority (SEDIA), here Friday.

Dr Ongkili, who is also Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) deputy president, was asked to comment on the latest status of the proposed RCI.

Asked whether Najib would probably make the announcement in Sabah next week, Ongkili said, "It is possible, if you all ask him". He said all state BN component parties wanted the RCI issue to be resolved.

However, Dr Ongkili said, the ordinary RCI itself would not necessarily solve the problem because it might come up with an "open verdict or no finding".

"We want an RCI that addresses how we deal with these matters today, especially the illegal immigrants in Sabah, because RCI is investigative.

"How come this happened, who did it and what should be done to the people who did it? That's typical of RCI ... it always comes up with an open verdict. We want an RCI that is forward-looking," he said.

Dr Ongkili, who is the chairman of the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform, said that out of 10 proposals submitted by the PSC, the Election Commission (EC) has taken on six proposals to ensure that the election process is carried out independently and fairly.

"One of these proposals is for the use of indelible ink in all elections. If everything goes well, this will be gazetted on Feb 15," he said.

According to the EC, Dr Ongkili said, there will no longer be a three-day cooling-off period for candidates, and that they cannot withdraw from contesting once they have entered their names as election candidates. This, according to the EC, will be gazetted in the first week of April.

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