

PM Explains Devolution Of Power To Sabah, Sarawak
Bernama
Sept 16, 2015

KOTA KINABALU, Sept 16 (Bernama) -- The federal government is agreeable to devolution of power to Sabah and Sarawak because this is compatible with the desire of the two state governments to play a more important role that reflects the aspirations of Malaysians there, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Prime Minister said the first stage of the devolution of power would involve administrative matters.

In this connection, Najib said the state governments would be given a bigger role in determining projects, especially priority projects.

"... and the location of projects, whereby discussions will be held between the federal and state governments in the matter," he told reporters after officially opening Terminal 1 of the Kota Kinabalu International Airport here Wednesday.

Also present at the event were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman and Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Liow Tiong Lai.

Najib said the evaluation of tenders for projects done at the federal level could be implemented at the state level through a committee comprising the state secretary and federal government representatives. Interviews for the recruitment of civil service employees, such as teachers and policemen, could be held in other suitable venues besides the major cities to make it easier for people in the interior to attend them, he said.

Najib also said that too many teachers from the peninsula had been emplaced in Sabah and Sarawak and they did not remain long in the states besides the posting of inexperienced teachers to the two states.

As such, he said, the federal government targeted to have 90 per cent of the teachers to be those who hailed from Sabah and Sarawak over the next three years.

"For example, the number of Sarawak-born teachers now stands at 32,168 of the 41,935. Over the next three years, the number of Sarawak-born teachers will have risen to 38,082, an increase of 5,914," he said. Najib said the state legal officer would be empowered by the Public Prosecutor under the Criminal Procedure Code to undertake prosecution for offences that come under the state ordinance.

He also said that the federal government had approved 100 posts of immigration officer for Sarawak and a number would be determined for Sabah for the purpose of enforcement.

The federal government also empowered traffic wardens at local authorities to use vehicle

clamping equipment on public roads and parking lots, he said.

Najib said the state governments would also be included in the committees that approved deep-sea fishing licences.

The prime minister said a joint federal-state government committee would be established as a platform for the devolution of more powers.

The committee would ensure that the devolution of power was implemented properly and look into the overlapping of functions of federal and state government agencies, he said.

Najib said the federal government approved in principle the upgrading of the Serian District Office to the Serian Division Administration and the elevation of seven sub-districts to districts, namely Tebedu, Pusa, Kabung, Tanjung Manis, Sebauh, Subis and Beluru.

He also said that two new district offices would be established, in Telang Usan and Bukit Mabong, and four new sub-district offices would be set up, in Bario, Tinjar, Long Bedian and Mulu.

"We will also determine the needs for Sabah after discussions with the state government," he said.

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