

**Higher Allocation For Sarawak Not Because Of State Election – DPM  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 25 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has dismissed claims by some quarters that the higher allocation for Sarawak in Budget 2016 is for winning the upcoming state election there.

He said the question of buying votes should not have been brought up because whatever the allocation in the budget for Sarawak is because the federal government had always been concerned about the needs of the people in the state.

"This is not about the state election but about the concern of the Malaysian government in providing benefits and good services to all citizens.

"Sarawakians deserve the special allocation (in the budget)...it's not so much about they'll be facing the state election but they deserve to get it as announced in the budget," he told reporters after opening the National Consumers Day 2015 at Dataran Merdeka here Sunday.

Prime Minister Menteri Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak when tabling Budget 2016 themed "Prospering the Rakyat" on Friday had announced an allocation of more than RM29 billion for development projects and initiatives for the benefit of the people in Sabah and Sarawak.

Among others, RM260 million was allocated to ensure prices of goods in the two states were fixed at the same rate, under the 1Harga 1Sabah and 1Harga 1Sarawak programme. Najib also announced that the Pan-Borneo Highway which will be completed in 2021 at a cost of RM28.9 billion, will be toll-free.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Zahid stressed that the raise in the tax rate for those in the higher income bracket was tax structuring that was progressive.

He described allegations by some that the government was behaving like 'Robin Hood' in doing so as the perception of people who were not "not at ease" with the move.

"The increase is not to seize or redistribute wealth, but it is structuring tax in a progressive way, which is being done in other developing and developed countries. "We find in several countries the rate is much higher than Malaysia, in fact there are countries where the rate is up to 50 per cent, but I don't think that will happen in Malaysia... so don't use terms that give a negative image on our taxation policy," he added.

The new rates announced under Budget 2016 were 26 per cent for those earning from RM600,000 to RM1 million annually as compared to 25 per cent previously while for those whose income exceeded RM1 million, the rate was raised by three per cent to 28 per cent.

However, some quarters tried to politicise the matter and claimed that the government was

acting like Robin Hood, a fictional English folk hero who robbed the rich to help the poor.

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