

## **SARAWAK'S PROPOSAL TO SET UP BOUTIQUE AIRLINE GETS 'GREENLIGHT' FROM PM ANWAR**

**DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM**

**NEWS**

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KUCHING, April 17 — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has agreed in principle to a proposal from the Sarawak state government to establish a state-owned boutique airline that is aimed to stabilise airfare prices from the peninsula to the Borneo Island.

Anwar said the presence of the airline can ease the issue of expensive airfare rates between the Peninsula to Sarawak and Sabah.

“Looking at the performance and capability of the Sarawak government, I have agreed in principle to the proposal of setting up another airline company by the Sarawak government,” he said in his speech at the official opening of the Raia Convention Centre and Hotel, here today.

The Prime Minister added that the Sarawak government’s proposal would be brought to the weekly cabinet meeting scheduled tomorrow for further discussion.

“I agree to the proposal. In fact in our cabinet meeting last week and Wednesday’s meeting, the details like expensive airfare and the setting up of a new boutique airline as suggested by the Sarawak state government will be discussed,” he said.

Earlier, in his speech at the same function, Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg had expressed hope that the Federal Government would approve the proposal to set up the state-owned airline.

Abang Johari had said that the setting up of a new airline would help stabilise airfare rates that are deemed high currently.

“We (Sarawak) are in the Borneo Island, if people want to come here, they need to take a flight because they cannot use any other mode of transport but the airfare is expensive.

“We actually do not want to compete with other airlines but just want to stabilise airfare to the state. The airfare from Kuala Lumpur to Kuching is the same as the airfare from Kuala Lumpur to Hong Kong. Therefore, the state government is ready to invest in an airline company,” he said.

On Nov 13, last year, Abang Johari was reported as saying that the Sarawak state government was still waiting for approval of a licence from the Transport Ministry to enable the state to set up and operate its own airline.

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