

SPECIAL GRANTS TO SABAH, SARAWAK SHOULD BE REVIEWED - PM ANWAR

YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM

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PUTRAJAYA, Jan 4 (Bernama) — The provision of special grants to Sabah and Sarawak according to Article 112D of the Federal Constitution should be reviewed once every five years so that the amount allocated will be more reasonable, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said.

In fact, he said the Federal Government would also ensure that there will be a reasonable increase in the amount of the grants and that it would remain separate from the capitation grant or the Malaysian Road Records Information System (MARRIS) grant.

“In the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), there was a mention of Article 112D about reasonable grants to be provided to Sarawak and Sabah, starting with RM16 million and RM26 million, respectively, which should be reviewed once every five years, but this did not happen,” he told a press conference after chairing the Cabinet meeting here today.

As such, Anwar said the Federal Government will revive the review of the grants and that he hoped the matter would be finalised during his meeting with Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor in Kuching at the end of this month.

At the same time, Anwar said the Ministry of Finance has agreed for the implementation of any project with a cost below RM50 million in Sabah and

Sarawak to be almost entirely decided by the state governments, subject to compliance with financial regulations.

“Even though we have the Works Department in Sabah and Sarawak, many decisions were still made in Putrajaya and despite the huge allocation given, it could not be fully utilised due to bureaucracy and the usual practice of having to refer everything to the Federal (Government),” he said.

The Prime Minister said today’s leaders need to be persistent in defending Malaysia’s spirit in MA63 while doing their level best to honour the agreement which reflects the wisdom of the previous leadership.

In this context, he said the MA63 Technical Committee chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof will continue to ensure that all pending issues related to MA63 can be resolved accordingly.

On the Pan Borneo Highway project, Anwar said the progress of the project in Sarawak was better than in Sabah, which requires additional allocations that will be detailed by Fadillah and the Ministry of Public Works.

Meanwhile, he said the Sabah State Assembly will finalise the transfer of the regulatory power for gas supply in Sabah from the Federal Government to the Sabah Government after it was consented by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri’ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, last month.

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