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SABAH WATER SUPPLY MOVE A GAME CHANGER

New Straits Times, Malaysia

RM4.06B IN PROJECTS HANDED OVER

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The delegation of authority will enable agencies to operate more effectively, says Zahid

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Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi submitting the official handover note for the rural water supply projects to Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor at the latter's residence in Sri Gaya on Wednesday. PIC FROM ZAHID HAMIDI FACEBOOK PAGE

THE delegation of authority for rural water supply projects in Sabah is a game changer that allows state agencies to operate more effectively, says Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Zahid, who is also the rural and regional development minister, said the move follows input from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and discussions with ministry officials.

"As a result, RM4.06 billion worth of rural water supply projects have been handed over to the Sabah government.

"We are doing this to fulfil the last state election manifesto. Given that multiple parties now form the Sabah government, coordination between federal and state ministries is crucial to ensure delivery," he said.

Zahid clarified that the move was entirely separate from the Malaysia Agreement 1963.

"This proactive step is not merely for optics, but to ensure real implementation. What matters most are the stakeholders — the people — who will ultimately benefit from it," he said after chairing a meeting at the Sabah Rural Development Ministry office.

He said the initiative involves 83 projects, including those under the 11th Malaysia Plan, which were not implemented due to various constraints.

In Sabah, these projects will be placed under the Rural Development Ministry and implemented by the Public Works Department, the Drainage and Irrigation Department and the Sabah State Water Department.

"To monitor implementation, a High-Level Committee (HLC) will be established and will begin meeting next week.

"It will involve officials from the ministry, the Federal Secretary, the Implementation Coordination Unit and relevant agencies to ensure implementation is expedited," Zahid said.

He said the 83 projects faced cost constraints, particularly regarding energy.

"Overall pricing and adjustments will be coordinated by the National Economic Action Council, with guidelines implemented by the Finance and Economy ministries."

Zahid said Sabah was capable of accelerating the projects as the state government had created 184 new positions, mainly for engineers and technicians.

He added that another meeting involving federal and state officials would be held within two weeks to coordinate other rural infrastructure projects.

Before the meeting, Zahid met Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor on the initiative.

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SUMMARIES

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