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Charitable foundation launched

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - In a synergistic effort to ease the plight of the unfortunate and less privileged, the Sultanah Bahiyah Foundation was launched tonight, building upon the Kedah Sultanah's longstanding charity work.

The foundation was set up to pool the energy, expertise and financial resources of various charitable and welfare organisations in Kedah and the country as a whole.

Present at the launch were the Sultan of Kedah Tuanku Abdul Halim, the Sultanah Tuanku Bahiyah, their daughter Datuk Seri Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz, who is also the foundation's chairman, and members of the royal family.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, his wife Puan Seri Nila Inangda Manyam Keumala headed the list of guests at the launch held at the Kuala Lumpur Hilton.

In his speech, the Sultan said as the nation's economy continued to boom, society should not forget the unfortunate and less privileged.

"What may seem to be a heavy burden for some can be lightened with a concerted effort from all concerned.

"From experience, I am glad and thankful Malaysians have proven and continue to show their caring spirit and concern for the less fortunate," the Sultan said.

Earlier, when addressing the gathering, foundation chairman Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz announced that the foundation would initiate the Titian Ehsan project, geared towards introducing after-care programmes for former dadah addicts upon completion of their rehabilitation.

"From statistics available, about 70 per cent of addicts return to their old habit after rehabilitation."

Elaborating on the project, she said it would provide shelter, practical and moral support, and after-care treatment to help former addicts return to their families and mainstream society.

The four-pronged project involves providing shelter for those in need, helping them find work in the agriculture or manufacturing sector, providing aid in finding long-term employment as well as additional guidance and counselling.

Later in the evening, Tuanku Bahiyah was surprised with a birthday cake, much to the delight of those present.

Tuanku Bahiyah later received donations amounting to RM350,000 for the foundation.

The donors were Pernas International Holdings Berhad (RM100,000); Sime Darby Berhad (RM100,000); Eupe Corporation Bhd, Berjaya Sports Toto and Edaran Otomobil Nasional Berhad (RM50,000 each).

The foundation was named after the Sultanah in recognition of her efforts in charity.

Among the organisations the Sultanah is actively involved in as patron are the Kedah Children's Welfare Council, Thalassaemia Association, Family Planning Association, Blood Donation Association and Association for the Mentally Disabled.

The Sultanah Bahiyah Foundation, administered by an appointed board of directors, was incorporated as a non-profit company and registered with the Registrar of Companies on Aug 20 last year.

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