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Bernas' health aid for padi farmers

HULU TERENGGANU, Fri. - Padiberas Nasional Bhd today launched its health support service to encourage padi farmers to seek treatment at government clinics or the nearest hospital.

The community project, launched by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at the Hulu Terengganu Hospital, involves several selected villages in the country's granary here, Kedah and Perlis.

Bernas has provided a van for each of the States to ferry padi farmers to the clinics or hospitals. The operating cost is borne by the company.

Bernas chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Noor Abdul Rahim said the primary objective of the project was to complement the Government's efforts in improving the health standard of the public.

"It is also a show of appreciation of padi farmers who have helped Bernas in its operation," he said.

He said many of the padi farmers did not seek medical treatment because they did not have their own vehicles.

"Another factor is the poor public transportation in certain remote areas," he said.

In Terengganu, the van will initially service Besut and will benefit 1,000 families in Kampung Durian Telor, Kampung Oh and Kampung Awek.

Mohd Noor said the project was an extension to Bernas' education fund for children of padi farmers launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in November last year.

"Financial assistance is given out to those between Standard Four and Form Five who excell in their education," he said.

Abdullah commended Bernas for the community project.

"It shows that Government companies and statutory bodies do not forget their social obligation," he said. "Bernas did make some profits from its business and it does not forget those who have contributed to it."

Abdullah suggested that Bernas equipped their vans with tele-medicine facilities for the benefit of padi farmers.

Earlier, Abdullah had assured the people of Kampung Teris that Umno would channel every single sen of Government allocation meant to help those in need.

"For instance, we have allocated RM123,508 to assist 401 poor families under our poverty programme and another RM1.5 million to build houses for those in the hardcore poor development programme."

He said the Government would continue to help those in need.

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