

'SABAH hardcore POOR MORE THAN HALVED'

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Government working to reduce extreme poverty nationwide even further, says Anwar

OLIVIA MIWIL
KOTA KINABALU
news@nst.com.my



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor interacting with the people at the National Madani Aidilfitri celebration in Kota Kinabalu yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

THE federal government will continue to focus on eradicating hardcore poverty in the state, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

“Hardcore poverty has been the Madani government’s main focus. Within a year, the number (of households categorised as hardcore poor in the state) has fallen from 25,000 to about 11,000.

“We stimulate (economic) growth. We aim for more investments and tourism, with hotels fully occupied by tourists. But our main responsibility is to eradicate hardcore poverty.

“We want to eradicate it nationwide. It has been eradicated in Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, Negri Sembilan, Johor, Perak and Penang.

“In Sabah, the problems are more complicated, with the influx (of immigrants) and border encroachment. But I will give full support to Sabah under the leadership of Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor.

“This month, I have instructed the director-general of the Prime Minister’s Department’s Implementation Coordinating Unit (ICU), as well as the state government and all relevant agencies, to hold a meeting aimed at reducing the number (of households in hardcore poverty) from 11,000 to as few as possible, as soon as possible,” he said at the National Madani Aidilfitri celebration at the Sabah International Convention Centre here.

He added that this year, the federal government, under the ICU, had allocated RM36.91 million for Sabah and RM34.63 million for Sarawak for Bumiputera socio-economic development programmes.

Present were Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Juhar Mahiruddin and wife Toh Puan Norlidah RM Jasni.

Earlier, Anwar said he, his

deputies Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, as well as other federal and state ministers, had a meeting at Menara Kinabalu.

“This is the practice whenever we visit a state to ensure projects are being implemented. They cannot be monitored only from Putrajaya.

“We require information and briefings from the state secretary to identify issues, such as water supply and road conditions, as well as details on the Pan Borneo Highway, electricity problems and the lack of schools in Kota Kinabalu.”

“All of these concerns can be voiced, and we will take note.

“This is the Madani spirit and we execute them well,” he said, adding that he thanked Hajiji for informing the federal government on what needed to be done.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor said the economic achievements in the past three years showed the state government’s resolve to administer and develop Sabah.

He said Sabah had achieved several economic successes through the five-year development blueprint — Hala Tuju Sabah Maju Jaya.

“With these successes, I dare say that Sabah is now on the right track,” said Hajiji

“Several economic indicators have shown a positive change re-

flecting a better future for Sabah.”

He said the selection of Sabah as the host for the National Madani Aidilfitri celebration this year was not only an honour, but also a recognition of the state’s multiracial, multiethnic and diverse cultural and religious landscape, all coexisting in harmony.

“We have a diverse set of people from all backgrounds, religions and races, but we remain harmonious.

“We celebrate all festivals be it Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Deepavali and Kaamatan festival. This is the uniqueness and strength of Sabah.”

Hajiji said the National Madani Aidilfitri celebration, attended by many including the nation’s top leaders, could foster greater relations among the people and galvanise the spirit of unity.

“In line with the Malaysia Madani spirit and greater agenda of the unity government under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, which aims to restore the country’s global standing, Sabah fully supports this agenda for the nation and the people’s prosperity.

“We in Sabah believe that racial harmony is key to prosperity. It also contributes to peace, security and unity.

“A united society is a resilient society averse to negative elements that seek to divide.”