

KEDAH RULER LAUDS PM'S EFFORTS TO FIGHT POVERTY

Number of hardcore poor families in state reduced by 77pc, says sultan

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SULTAN of Kedah Al Aminul Karim Sultan Sallehuddin Sultan Badlishah has expressed his appreciation to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for his commitment to eradicate hardcore poverty in the state.

His Royal Highness said the number of hardcore poor families in Kedah had dropped from 1,750 to just 404 — a reduction of 77 per cent.

Sultan Sallehuddin said this in the royal address at the investiture in conjunction with his 82nd birthday celebration at Istana Anak Bukit here yesterday.

Sultanah of Kedah Sultanah Maliha Tengku Ariff, the Raja Muda of Kedah, Tengku Sarafudin Badlishah Sultan Sallehuddin, and the Raja Puan Muda of Kedah, Che Puan Muda Zaheeda Mohamad Ariff, also graced the ceremony.

Sultan Sallehuddin commended Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor and the state leadership for strengthening ties between the Kedah and federal governments.

"I am confident that the effort by the menteri besar and state leadership to strengthen ties with federal government is a very wise move."

Sultan Sallehuddin said he hoped the federal government would fulfil a development wish-list that state government presented on May 4.

"I really hope for the prime minister and the federal govern-

ment to approve the request for a RM200 million fiscal incentive for the Kedah government.

"This is a reciprocating mechanism, where my government has to retain 113,000ha of padi cultivation area, which meets 43 per cent of the nation's rice needs. (Retaining these padi fields is) a lost opportunity for other developments and agricultural activities that could generate higher revenue for the state."

Sultan Sallehuddin said the fiscal incentive could expand economic activities, such as developing more commercial areas for entrepreneurs.

Sultan Sallehuddin said the state attracted more than RM100 billion in investments since 2020 under the 12th Malaysia Plan and Kedah Development Plan 2035.

He said this showed Kedah's potential to attract investors and commended the state's efforts to facilitate business.

"I was informed about the rapid development at the Malaysia-Thailand border involving the Kubang Pasu and Padang Terap districts, such as the construction of the road to link the Bukit Kayu Hitam Immigration, Customs, Quarantine and Security (ICQS) Complex and the Sadao ICQ Complex (in Thailand).

"As such, I wish the federal government to enhance the border's development nodes. This is because almost 50 per cent of the Bukit Kayu Hitam Special Border Economic Zone and Kedah Rubber City is led by NGX, a subsidiary of the Finance Ministry Inc and the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority."

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**AL AMINUL KARIM
SULTAN SALLEHUDDIN
SULTAN BADLISHAH
Sultan of Kedah**