

## HELPING HAND

# FELDA TO GET RM100M IN SUBSIDIES

**PM says govt wants to ensure settlers' income not affected by diesel subsidy reforms**

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**T**HE government approved a RM100 million subsidy allocation for the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) to cover the operational cost of its settlers.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday said the decision was made following discussions with stakeholders on diesel subsidy reforms.

"The government has implemented targeted diesel subsidies to address smuggling and leakage of subsidised diesel.

"At the same time, the gov-

ernment has provided aid to the targeted groups in need.

"Considering the financial implications on Felda of RM121.6 million per year due to increased diesel prices, the government will allocate an additional subsidy of around RM100 million to it to cover increases in plantation operating costs and ensure that the income of settlers is not affected."

He said this at the launch of Felda Settlers Day at Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang here.

He said individual groups were invited to discuss their plight with the government based on facts.

He clarified that the alloca-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim launching the Felda Settlers Day at Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang yesterday. With him are Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (second from right) and Federal Land Development Authority chairman Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek (second from left). PIC BY ASYRAF HAMZAH

tion was given after Felda chairman Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek on Friday had brought up the issue of hardship faced by settlers caused by the diesel subsidy reforms.

He added that the government would look into ways of helping Felda settlers, who drove their vehicles without road tax.

On 21 May, he announced the cabinet's decision to implement fuel subsidy rationalisation, focusing on diesel.

On June 9, Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan said diesel prices in Peninsular Malaysia would be set at

RM3.35 per litre from June 10.

Amir Hamzah said this move would save the country RM4 billion annually.

Meanwhile, the government has approved a RM31.7 million allocation for Felda settlers to participate in the Madani Community Wellbeing Programme (SejaTi Madani).

Anwar said the allocation would be given to 317 settlements, which equates to RM100,000 per settlement.

"The community is given the freedom to decide on sectors of focus.

He said the community in the settlements should discuss pro-

posed programmes so that they could be inclusive.

SejaTi Madani is a form of government assistance aimed at boosting economic activities at the community level.

Anwar called on Felda to adopt a community-centred approach in its management of the Felda Investment Cooperative to help manage settlers' funds.

"Cooperatives are important institutions, but sometimes, their weakness lies in appointing unqualified personnel.

"Funds should be managed efficiently (by the cooperative) and monitored by Felda without interference."