

Boosting padi harvests with five-season plan

By **IMRAN HILMY**
imran@thestar.com.my

ALOR SETAR: Harvesting rice from padi fields five times every two years must be fully entrenched within two years in Kedah's Muda region.

For generations, padi farmers have harvested only twice a year, and since the agri-technology for five harvests every two years is available, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim wants the farmers and agricultural authorities to embrace it.

He said the effort to accelerate the project was important as it would enrich padi farmers and the country's food security.

"Among the efforts that can be done are expediting land acquisitions to upgrade irrigation systems and requiring the agencies to provide regular progress reports to the ministry," he said yesterday after launching the

RM1bil infrastructure project to support the five-season padi planting programme every two years in the Muda region at Kampung Pida 4, Ayer Hitam.

Anwar said agencies under the ministry must submit reports promptly to keep abreast of issues and avoid complacency.

He said the delays would only burden the farmers and, at the same time, the country's agricultural progress.

He said the federal government was trying its best to help padi farmers and this infrastructure project was part of efforts to help them and the industry.

"Farmers should not be angry and upset, as this is not about political differences," he said.

Anwar said the government had assured the farmers that it was capable of helping and upgrading their livelihood.

Earlier, Anwar launched a RM1bil infrastructure project in

Fields of gold: Anwar visiting a padi field after launching the RM1bil infrastructure project at Kampung Pida 4, Ayer Hitam. — Bernama



Muda Agricultural Development Authority (Mada) padi fields.

The project includes the comprehensive rehabilitation of the Pedu Dam and the construction of 15 blocks of tertiary irrigation systems for Mada padi fields.

The dam, completed in 1966, is the primary source of irrigation for the Mada padi fields, which stretch from Perlis to Kedah.

The project cost includes six years of maintenance for the tertiary irrigation systems and seven

years for the Pedu Dam.

In a press conference, Mada chairman Datuk Dr Ismail Salleh said the 15 blocks would cover 10,730ha of padi fields across Mada's four regions: Perlis, Jitra Pendang, and Kota Sarang Semut