

**New Growth Centres Will Be Created In Rural Areas - Muhyiddin
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BARAM (Sarawak), Feb 25 (Bernama) -- The government will continue to identify rural areas to be developed as new growth centres, said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said the initiative under the Rural Transformation Programme was aimed at reducing migration of people from rural to urban areas.

"The government has never looked at rural areas as problematic areas, instead we look at the potential available for development purposes," he said at a "Meet-the-people Session" in Long Beruang here.

Also present were Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Alfred Jabu and Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal.

He said Long Beruang was among the areas that had potential to be a new rural growth centre.

Muhyiddin said the Barisan Nasional (BN) government at the federal and state level had already taken several initiatives to develop Long Beruang which is inhabited by the Penan community.

The efforts negated allegations by certain quarters that the government was neglecting the welfare of rural people, he said, adding that the BN government wanted the Penan community to progress in tandem with the other communities in the country.

While at Long Beruang, the deputy prime minister launched a Rural and Regional Development Ministry solar power project costing RM1.5 million which will benefit 350 people involving 67 households in the area.

He also launched a Celcom telecommunications tower project valued at RM2 million which will enable better cellular coverage in the area, besides presenting rubber seeds for rubber replanting and 6,000 empurau fry. The empurau is a much sought after exotic fish in Sarawak.

Muhyiddin also announced a RM1 million allocation for small projects in Long Beruang, which had been requested by the locals.

Meanwhile, when meeting the people living in Long Peluan, a village nearby Long Beruang, he had launched the Rural Transformation Programme.

He also approved a RM3.7 million allocation for an agriculture project involving cash crops planting for the benefit of the residents there.

Besides this, he also approved various kampung projects which have an overall value of RM628 million.

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