

'One baby, one tree' initiative celebrates Pahang newborns

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THE Pahang government has chosen a unique way to commemorate the arrival of newborn babies across the state since the beginning of this year.

As trees are used to represent life and growth, the state government has initiated a programme to plant a tree for each baby born.

The trees, which will be tagged with the names of the babies to symbolise their birth, will be planted in all 14 parliamentary constituencies across the state as part of the Pahang Pride Kid incentive.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail described the "one baby, one tree" initiative as a

special gesture to celebrate the arrival of newborns and encourage residents here to increase the population in the state.

"Since January, each newborn has received RM100 in a savings account with Bank Rakyat and another RM100 worth of baby and mother care products totalling RM200. This will be increased to RM300 next year. A sapling will be also planted for every child born in the state this year.

"Bank Rakyat has contributed RM250,000 for the purchase of the saplings, which will be carried out with the support of the Pahang Forestry Department. It will identify suitable trees to be planted depending on the landscape of the respective areas, like the Merawan Siput Jantan saplings in Kuantan and the casuarina trees in Pekan as it is close to the coastal areas,"

he said after launching the Pahang Pride Kid event at Taman Bandar in Indera Mahkota on Thursday.

Wan Rosdy said the Pahang Pride Kid initiative was among several programmes introduced under the brand name "Pahang Pride", which he announced when tabling the state budget in December last year.

"Pahang has drawn up initiatives specifically for the people ranging from newborns, students to senior citizens across the state. No one, regardless of their race, religion, place of residence or political ideology, is left behind. We also have the Pahang Pride Kasih and Pahang Pride Student programmes.

"The Pahang Pride Kasih programme, which is a health card programme for senior citizens, was launched on Jan 18, providing health cards worth RM500 for each individual. The aid involving an allocation of RM10 million caters for 18,000 recipients. They can use the card at selected private clinics in Pahang."

Wan Rosdy had, on Feb 22, the Pahang Pride Student aid programme was introduced to assist primary and secondary school students from the low-income groups in the state.

"The discount cards are given to 150,000 heads of families. That will benefit 238,000 students under their care to purchase school supplies at the MBS Books and Stationery stores throughout the year. They will be offered a 20 per cent discount.

"Under the programme, the Pahang government has set aside RM5 million to provide back-to-school supplies worth RM100 to some 50,000 poor and hardcore poor students in all 11 districts in Pahang," he said.

In April, Wan Rosdy announced an allocation of RM29.91 million for Ban-



Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail greeting a child at the Pahang Pride Kids launch at Taman Bandar in Kuantan on Thursday.

PIX BY FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG

tuan Prihatin Pahang 2022 that will benefit 297,013 recipients from four main clusters, namely students and youths, the Bottom 40 (B40) income group (including single mothers and fishermen), a general cluster consisting of Orang Asli and settlers, and an appreciation cluster (Kluster Apresiasi) that will cover police and armed forces veterans.

State Unity, Social Welfare, Women and Family Development Committee chairman Datuk Seri Shahaniza Shamsuddin, in her speech, said it was Wan Rosdy who first mooted the idea to provide an incentive to every child born in Pahang.

"Planting a tree to celebrate the birth of a baby is an inspiring vision and something to treasure for years. The site will not only become a tourist attraction but the child can return to visit and take pictures on his or her birthday.

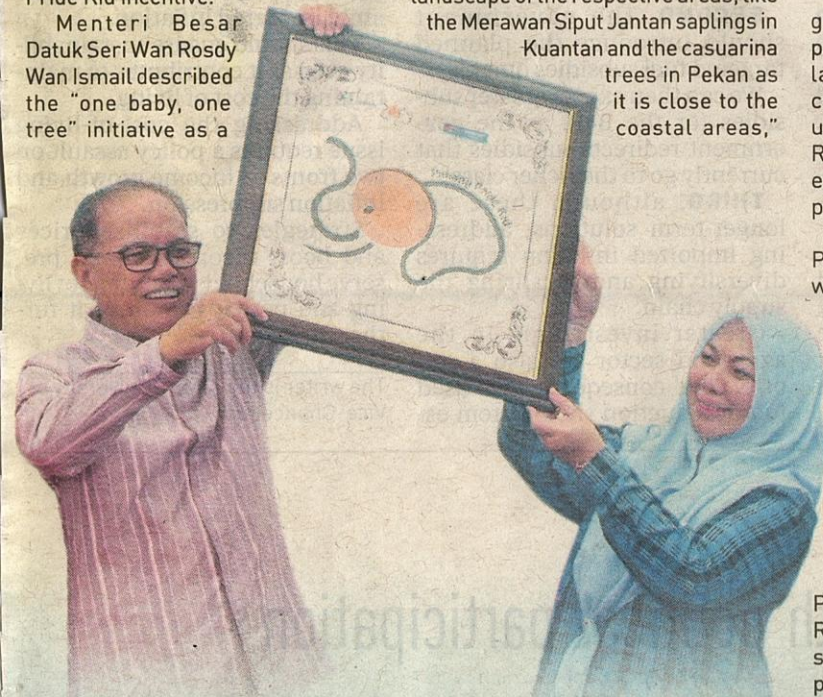
"Each sapling will be tagged with the child's name and the site will be

supervised by the respective district's Forestry officer. Each baby born is a pride to the state, just like how trees are important to our lives in many ways," she said.

Bank Rakyat chairman Datuk Abd Rani Lebai Jaafar described the Pahang Pride Kid initiative as unique, saying the financial institution's cooperation with the Pahang government had allowed newborns to open a savings account and participate in environmental sustainability efforts.

"Each child born will receive RM100 in Bank Rakyat's Nuri Savings-i Account. This will encourage the child to start saving from young. As a Nuri Club member, the child can participate in various programmes during the school holidays and tuition classes.

"Bank Rakyat contributed RM250,000 for the purchase of the saplings. We are happy to collaborate with the Pahang government and we hope this effort will go a long way."



Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail and State Unity, Social Welfare, Women and Family Development Committee chairman Datuk Seri Shahaniza Shamsuddin holding a plaque at the launch.