

Securing the country's 'rice bowl'

Kedah to be given agro, tahfiz and TVET focus to boost development

ALOR SETAR: Agrobusiness is among five areas that will be given focus in Kedah if parties of the unity government coalition are given the mandate to administer the state, says Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

The Deputy Prime Minister, who is also Rural and Regional Development Minister, said tahfiz (religious schools), TVET (technical and vocational education and training), water supply and telecommunication services would also be given special attention to develop human capital and boost development.

"The focus on agrobusiness will involve not only food security and maintaining Kedah's position as a rice bowl state but also to enhance productivity among padi entrepreneurs.

"For this, Mada (the Muda Agricultural Development Authority) will definitely find new methodologies to increase productivity.

"Padi farms should be helped



Future developments: Ahmad Zahid greeting attendees of the Kedah State Unity Convention. — Bernama

not only in terms of padi prices but also fertilisers and other kinds of aid," he said.

Ahmad Zahid, who is Barisan Nasional chairman, was speaking

to reporters after opening the Kedah State Unity Convention here yesterday, Bernama reported.

Also present were Kedah

Pakatan Harapan chairman Datuk Mahfuz Omar and Kedah Barisan chairman Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid.

On tahfiz, Ahmad Zahid said students in Kedah would be given help to achieve a higher level of education, especially in TVET, apart from maintaining their command of Quran studies.

"I have mentioned that the Federal Government is committed to helping all tahfiz students without marginalising Chinese schools and other types of schools.

"This means helping tahfiz to achieve a higher academic level.

"UniKL (Universiti Kuala Lumpur) and other universities under my ministry are committed to helping them to go all the way to the PhD level," he said, adding that there were about 9,000 tahfiz students in Kedah.

Ahmad Zahid said some tahfiz in Kedah were still not registered yet and the government would help them do so.

On TVET, he said the focus

would be on establishing a TVET college under the Kedah Regional Development Authority (Keda) and strengthening existing TVET institutions.

"For the 1,291 TVET institutions throughout the country, the government has spent RM6.8bil. Surely, Kedah will not be marginalised.

"We will empower it with several enhancement programmes and courses relevant to manpower needs," he added.

On water, Ahmad Zahid said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim would personally handle the issue of domestic water supply while telecommunication services in rural areas would be strengthened, including with 5G coverage.

"I have stressed that rural areas should be part of roaming 5G coverage.

"I myself will see to it. This is our determination if we take over Kedah (in state polls this year)," he said.