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EIGHT DAYS OF MERRIMENT

NAJIB TO CLOSE KEDAH EXPO TODAY

Highlights include the announcement of winners of two PR1MA homes

PETAH WAZZAN ISKANDAR AND MUHAAMAD HAFIS NAWAWI ALOR STAR news@nst.com.my

AS Ekspo Muafakat Kedah 2018, the biggest exposition held in Kedah, enters its final day today after eight days of merriment, visitors are hopeful they will be the lucky ones among the hundreds of thousands of people to win the two houses offered in the lucky draw.

That would be among the highlights during the closing ceremony to be officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at 4pm today.

Besides the two units of homes under the 1Malaysia People's



Housing Programme (PRIMA), visitors stand to win three cars, six motorcycles and other prizes worth RMI million.

The expo comprises 20 clusters involving 119 state and federal agencies, and the private sector.

Throughout the exposition, visitors witnessed the state government's achievements in Kedah and plans in the pipeline for Kedahans.

People from all walks of life had the opportunity to engage with government agencies, besides sharing their opinions and aspirations on the state's future planning through the "Suara Hati Kedah" corner at the Menteri Besar's Barakah Cluster. The state government gath-



Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar (fourth from right) handing over a cheque to Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia northern region manager Norhayati Hussin (second from left) at the state-level Kelab Usahawan Ikhtiar Cawangan dan Kesukarelawan (KUICK) event held on the sidelines of Ekspo Muafakat Kedah 2018 in Alor Star yesterday. With them is Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah (third from right). BERNAMA PIC

ered thousands of entrepreneurs from all over the state, as well as government agencies to assist youth to venture into business.

Among the participants at the state-level Kelab Usahawan Ikhtiar Cawangan dan Kesukarelawan (KUICK) event held yesterday on the sidelines of the expo were entrepreneurs from Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM).

They were from low-income families who had received government funding and guidance to start small-scale businesses, which helped them get out of poverty.

Travel agency entrepreneur

Normalawati Kassim, 43, from Langkawi, said the AIM programme transformed her life.

She was earning a meagre income selling corn at night markets.

She said her life changed for the better after she received funding from AIM to venture into the travel agency business.

"I offered tour boat (rides) and car rental services, as well as sold souvenirs.

"As my business grew, other government agencies came forward to offer aid to further expand my business.

"I am happy that I could repay my business loans within a short

time," she said.

"I am grateful for the government's assistance. It has made me what I am now."

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah launched the event.

Present was Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar. Bashah hoped KUICK would continue promoting entrepreneurship while helping its members grow their businesses.

He announced a RM45,000 allocation for 15 Kelab Usahawan AIM Negeri Kedah.

On Thursday, Bashah joined a 10,000 crowd at Malam Kedah Berselawat at Zahir Mosque here.

The programme featured preacher Datuk Ustaz Mohd Kazim Elias and *nasyid* group Rabbani. **Additional reporting by Suzalina Halid**



Normalawati Kassim