



Abang Johari with Sarawakian youths during Lan Berambeh 2019 in Kuala Lumpur on Oct 19.

# Ensuring a better quality of life for families

WITH the introduction of many people- and family-centric initiatives by Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg, Awang Jamalludin Fadzillah can now plan to have more children.

The 41-year-old entrepreneur and his wife Noorsusilawai Ismail, 39, an assistant engineer, believe they would be able to better manage their household and three children thanks to the Sarawak government's initiatives.

They have nine-year-old twin boys - Awangku Adam and Awangku Adef - and two-year-old daughter Dayangku Adra Laila.

The initiative that enticed the couple the most was the RM450 post-natal care per birth, which would greatly help mothers in providing needed care for a newborn.

"I think the RM450 in additional assistance for post-natal care to Sarawakian women who are giving birth is just great. Perhaps my wife would want to have more children, so that she could benefit from this incentive," quipped Awang Jamalludin.

The special assistance for mothers was announced by Abang Johari in the Sarawak Budget 2020 last November.

This was on top of the existing Endowment Fund Sarawak announced by Abang Johari, who is also Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS) chairman, on Jan 1, 2019, under which each newborn Sarawakian will receive an RM1,000 incentive.

That, along with several other people- and family-centric initiatives by the state government, would certainly



Abang Johari (front fourth left) is seen at a Rumah Spektra Permata model house in Kemuyang, Sibu on April 7, 2019, when he announced the government would build 2,500 affordable houses throughout Sarawak. He is flanked by Minister of Housing and Local Government Dato Sri Dr Sim Kui Hian and Assistant Minister of Local Government and Housing Dr Annuar Rapae.

benefit many families in Sarawak, especially those from the lower income (B40) group. For Awang Jamalludin, the free school bus service is another initiative that would be most helpful to families.

"I love the free school bus initiative; at least it would take some burden off. At the moment, I drive my twins to school, and my girl to the nursery."

"With the free school bus, at least it would leave me with much more flexibility for me to run my food business and perhaps, expand my catering services," he said.

When announcing the initiative during the State

Legislative Assembly (DUN) sitting last November, Abang Johari said the service would be based on the 'hop-on hop-off' concept, where students could just board a bus at any point along a route and then hop off at their respective schools.

The pilot project would be trialed in Kuching this year to ease the financial burden of low-income families in urban areas.

"The GPS government's policy is always to prioritise Sarawak and its people," Abang Johari said during a Leaders-with-the-People session in Spaoh on March 11, 2019.

In August 2019, Abang Johari also approved an allocation of RM5 million for the Sarawak

Youth Venture Capital. The initiative announced in November 2018 is for youths aged 15 to 40, be they individuals, teams, or associations specialising in any discipline of arts and culture to further develop their talent.

Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah said in August 2019 the capital is not for doing business, and strictly meant for arts, culture, and innovation, to help youths who have the talent in arts and culture, especially music and theatre, to improve themselves.

Abang Johari also announced RM30 million to help young Sarawakians pay back their National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) loans.

The PTPTN issue was brought to Abang Johari's attention during the 'Lan Berambeh Anak Sarawak' event in Kuala Lumpur on Oct 19, 2019.

To address the end-financing problem faced by house buyers, the Chief Minister, during the Sarawak Budget 2020, proposed an additional sum of RM100 million for Mutiara Mortgage & Credit Sdn Bhd.

Established in 2014, Mutiara Mortgage & Credit Sdn Bhd was set up to provide loans to the B40 group to purchase houses developed by Housing Development Corporation (HDC).

"To date, RM37 million has been disbursed to 879 applicants. An additional sum of RM100 million is proposed to be set aside for Mutiara Mortgage & Credit Sdn Bhd for this purpose," Abang Johari said.

For administrative officer Zurina Bujang, 41, this initiative is timely as prices of houses continue to skyrocket, and

## FOR THE PEOPLE

- FREE SCHOOL BUS**  
Pilot hop-on, hop-off initiative in Kuching before expanding to other urban areas
- 24-HOUR ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**  
For 14,000 rural households and another 8,360 households in remote areas using off-grid system
- RM30 MILLION FINANCIAL AID**  
For entrepreneurs through the Sarawak Micro Credit Scheme
- LANDAS SEASON SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FISHERMEN**  
Cash allowance of RM300 per month per fisherman as well as equipment assistance
- RM4 MILLION**  
Towards the creation of youth and sports excellence through the Sarawak Youth Venture Capital
- RM450**  
Additional assistance to mothers for post-natal care
- RM30 MILLION**  
To assist Sarawakian graduates who may have difficulties in the repayment of their PTPTN loan
- FREE ELECTRICITY**  
For 5,000 remote rural households at 192 villages or longhouses utilising a standalone off-grid renewable system.
- HOUSING LOAN**  
For the low-income (B40) group to purchase houses developed by HDC
- RM100 MILLION**  
For JKKK programmes and allowances
- RM5 WATER BILL SUBSIDY**  
Per month for every household
- FREE ELECTRICITY CONNECTION CHARGES**  
For connection charges up to RM5,000, cost will be fully borne by the state government while a 70 per cent subsidy for connection charges above RM5,000 to RM10,000



Awang Jamalludin and his wife Noorsusilawai with their children Dayangku Adra, Awangku Adam, and Awangku Adef.

applying for housing loans has gotten more difficult. She said even those who do not fall into the B40 group find it very difficult to apply for housing loans.

"Still, I believe that house prices are everyone's concern, whether they're B40 or better off - they're just too high nowadays," she said, while welcoming the Sarawak government's initiative.

Abang Johari said the government would also provide RM90 million for the minor house repairs scheme known as 'Program Pembaikan Rumah Rakyat Miskin Sarawak' (MRP-PPRMS), meant for the B40 group.

Other initiatives that would benefit Sarawakians include

the microcredit scheme to help budding SME entrepreneurs, RM5 water subsidy per month, 24-7 electricity coverage for 13,000 rural homes, and RM300 Landas Season Special Assistance for each small-scale fisherman.

Another that would help rural folk would be free electricity supply for 5,000 rural homes, free electricity connection fee for the low-income group if the cost is RM5,000 or below, and 70 per cent discount for connection charges from RM5,000 to RM10,000.

Abang Johari also announced an allocation of RM100 million for 2020 for the allowances of village development and security committee (JKKK) members statewide.