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KAMPUNG GAJAH (HILIR PERAK), MARCH 16 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY ASSURED OWNERS OF IDLE LAND THEY WILL NOT LOSE THEIR LAND UNDER THE PROGRAMME TO COMBINE SMALL PLOTS OF LAND INTO MINI ESTATES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THEY SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A PROGRAMME AS THE RETURNS WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED TO PARTICIPANTS BASED ON THE SIZE OF THEIR PLOTS.

OPENING THE BLOCK A AND C OF THE KAMPUNG BUKIT CHAWI MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY NEAR HERE, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER OF MAKING MONEY FROM POOR PEOPLE THROUGH SUCH A SCHEME.

IN FACT, THE GOVERNMENT HAD APPROVED A LAUNCHING GRANT OF \$1 MILLION FOR THE KAMPUNG BUKIT CHAWI PADI MINI ESTATE PROJECT, HE SAID.

THE COOPERATIVE, WITH A MEMBERSHIP OF 380, IS DEVELOPING 1,120 HECTARES OF PADI LAND THAT HAVE BEEN IDLE THE PAST 18 YEARS UNDER THE MINI ESTATE CONCEPT. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-ESTATE 2 KAMPUNG GAJAH (HILIR PERAK)

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR URGED OWNERS OF SMALL PLOTS OF NEGLECTED LAND IN KAMPUNGS TO STOP FEELING SUSPICIOUS OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DEVELOP THEIR LAND.

THEY SHOULD INSTEAD LOOK FORWARD TO INCREASED INCOME BY MERGING THEIR KAMPUNGS INTO SYSTEMATIC VILLAGES, COMBINING THEIR LAND FOR MECHANIZED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMMES AND SETTING UP INDUSTRIES USING LOCAL MATERIALS.

HE STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO WISH TO INCONVENIENCE THE KAMPUNG FOLK OR SEIZE THEIR LAND BY ASKING THEM TO AMALGAMATE THEIR LAND AND CREATE ORDERLY VILLAGES.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGED THE RESIDENTS OF KAMPUNG BUKIT CHAWI TO UNDERTAKE A PADI MINI ESTATE AS THE LAND WAS SUITABLE FOR PADI AND WOULD HELP THEM IMPROVE THEIR INCOME THROUGH CULTIVATION OF CASH CROPS.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS DOING THIS SOLELY FOR THE SAKE OF THE PEOPLE SINCE FOR EVERY \$1 EARNED BY A FARMER FROM THE SALE OF PADI, 50 SEN CAME FROM GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY, HE ADDED. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR--ESTATE 3 KAMPUNG GAJAH (HILIR PERAK)

PERAK MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI RAMLI NGAH TALIB SAID THE PRIME MINISTER HAD RECENTLY DIRECTED THE STATE GOVERNMENT TO IDENTIFY SUITABLE AREAS IN SEBERANG PERAK FOR CULTIVATION OF BANANAS FOR EXPORT.

FOLLOWING THAT, A 200-HECTARE SITE HAD BEEN EARMARKED FOR THE PURPOSE AND THE MALAYSIAN AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (MARDI) WAS UNDERTAKING A STUDY, THE RESULTS OF WHICH WOULD BE KNOWN IN SEVERAL MONTHS' TIME.

DATUK SERI RAMLI ALSO SAID THE STATE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING STEPS TO OPEN AGRICULTURAL SCHEMES FOR THOSE WHO WERE NOT ACCEPTED INTO FELDA OR FELCRA SCHEMES.

HE SAID 71,000 HECTARES OF NEGLECTED LAND IN THE STATE WOULD BE DEVELOPED BY 1990 OR 3,500 HECTARES A YEAR DURING THE FIFTH MALAYSIA PLAN PERIOD.

NATIONAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER DATUK SERI SANUSI JUNID AND DEPUTY PRIMARY INDUSTRIES MINISTER MEGAT JUNID MEGAT AYUB, WHO IS ALSO MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR HILIR PERAK, WERE PRESENT. -- BERNAM

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