

Felda settlers are not 'slaves'

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JENGA, Fri. — The Prime Minister today warned the people against being influenced by certain people who were spreading lies that settlers of Felda land schemes were slaves.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said these people even said the settlers were treated as slaves comparable to the treatment meted out by white plantation masters to the blacks in the last century.

He said these lies were spread by irresponsible elements to discredit the Government's efforts to raise the living standards of the people.

"This group does not

value the Government's struggle for development and is bold enough to accuse the Government of enslaving Felda settlers," the Prime Minister told a gathering of 40,000 Felda settlers here.

He said the *rakyat* themselves are aware that this group is deliberately twisting reality and poisoning the minds of the people.

The fact that there are still 9,000 applicants waiting to take part in Felda land schemes bear testimony to their trust and confidence in the Government.

He said it was no longer necessary for the Government to explain to the people its contributions to them.

On the other hand, the *rakyat* should be thankful that they are able to enjoy a prosperous life because of the Government's efforts.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, dismissed allegations that Umno members are infidels and described such allegations as a political issue aimed at disrupting unity.

"This political group enjoys creating doubts among the *rakyat* by enlarging issues that can threaten unity."

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At the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Institut Teknologi Maracampus here, Dr Mahathir stressed that the campus would be a symbol that would inspire rural development.

He added that when the campus is ready, students will be able to use every available facility to help enhance the realisation for rural development.

Dr Mahathir later presented a cheque for \$100,000 on behalf of the State Government to the chairman of the ITM council Datuk Mansor Othman.

Also present were Menteri Besar Datuk Haji Mohamad Najib Razak, Land and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Adib Adam, Deputy Finance Ministers Datuk Sabaruddin Chik and Datuk Dr Tan Tiong Hong.

Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali are on a two-day visit of Pahang.