

# PM: Emulate private plantations

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datuk Seri **Dr Mahathir** Mohamad has called on the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) to emulate, where possible, the manner in which the private sector manages its plantations.

The Prime Minister said there was nothing to prevent Felda from following the efficiency goals set by private plantation managements.

He said this when presenting Felda's Semai Bakti medal awards at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here tonight.

"Private plantations are successfully managed with efficiency, with low costs, and they have the capacity to produce the highest output.

"We are aware that the management strategy applied to

Felda is in between that for smallholdings and private plantations.

"The easiest course for Felda to take is to do what is usually done by smallholders. In it, work is easy and the pressure is not so great.

"However, if this practice is continued, there will surely be no progress. Felda must therefore emulate the actions which have been taken by private plantations."

## Revenue

The Prime Minister said since Felda was set up, the Government had been forced to bear the cost of administering it.

"Seeing that Felda projects were in the interest of the peo-

ple and the nation's development, the Government had continued to give the necessary allocations.

"As a result, Felda had grown. Its development expenditure and administrative costs have also increased.

"This represents a heavy burden to the Government especially when the country is experiencing a shortfall in revenue.

"I am not saying that the Government wants to run away from its responsibility.

"However, the fact which cannot be denied is that private plantations make profits even though management expenditure and financing of debts are borne by those plantations themselves from revenue derived from their output.

"Even when prices dropped, private plantations were able to meet all expenses from their revenue.

"Moreover, these plantations do not obtain advances from anyone at all," said the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir also said it was the Government's objective to change the attitude of smugness in receiving aid to that of pride in self-reliance.

Reminding his audience that the key to success is with the settlers themselves, he said:

"We must be enterprising and not hope only for revenue from our fields. It has been found both inside and outside Felda schemes that settlers have plunged into other economic projects.

"When economic activities are diversified, income will also increase."