

# Felda a model scheme, says PM

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By HARDEV KAUR (P)

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad told Felda settlers yesterday that only the Government can provide development and the various amenities that they now enjoy.

Speaking to more than 5,000 Felda settlers in Chiku 3, Gua Musang, in southern Kelantan, he said the Felda scheme has been so successful in its resettlement process, providing employment and generating income for the people, that it is now being emulated by other countries, including Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who visited Malaysia last year, was impressed when he visited a Felda scheme and decided to adopt the concept for his country.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Felda, with 566,580 ha, has the largest plantation in the world. Other plantation companies such as Sime Darby, Golden Hope and Boustead are nowhere close to Felda's acreage.

He also disclosed that Nigeria has adopted the practice of its officials using name tags following

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the visit of 62 government officials to Malaysia recently.

The gathering, which included a large group of Orang Asli, was told that the Barisan Nasional Government will fulfil its promises of development to the people, as it had done in the past. The BN Government is responsible and will continue to provide the necessary assistance to further improve the standard of living of Malaysians.

He added that Malaysia has, since independence, achieved tremendous development. This was achieved with government assistance as individuals will not be able to provide the necessary funds nor the expertise to do so in such a short period.

Also present were Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, Deputy Land and Regional Minister Datuk Khalid Yunus and Kelantan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Yaacob.

*Bernama adds:* Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, at a meeting at the Balai Islam in Kota Baru, reminded Groups C and D Muslim government employees of the risks they face if labour unions do not act properly in defending their rights.

Adopting a confrontational attitude towards the employers or Government merely to prove the

strength of the union leadership will be detrimental to everyone's interest, he said.

"A union can be considered as a body to check against possible suppression of workers, and any measure taken to prevent this can be done through discussion."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said any claims by the workers should be made through discussion to achieve consensus, and not by threatening to strike or taking other action.

Stressing the need for moderation in whatever they do, he cited the Malay adage "Kalau menarik benang dalam tepung ... biarlah benang itu tak putus dan tepung pula tak berkecai" (If we draw thread through dough ... don't

## says Mahathir

snap the thread and crumble the dough."

In this connection, he advised workers not to be easily influenced by certain union leaders who are using workers to further their own political ambitions.

These leaders, supposedly popular for "their aggressive manner in pursuing workers' rights, did not think of the effects their claims would have on the national economy and political stability", he said.

"Such leaders are usually those who did not have the opportunity to succeed in politics and they use the union as a platform to become more popular," he added.

The Prime Minister said it would be pointless for the Gov-

ernment to meet claims for a pay rise if this can lead to inflation, increase the country's debts and lower the people's purchasing power.

The country had managed its finances well and maintained the inflation rate at 2 per cent a year, unlike countries such as Argentina and Brazil whose inflation had soared to 20,000 per cent a year.

He said Malaysia does not want to become bankrupt and it will not be like Brazil, Mexico and Nigeria which have to borrow from everywhere to meet their expenditure.

"Instead, we have been labelled a model country by the World Bank because of orderly repay-

ment of our debts," he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also reminded workers of the need to always maintain political stability.

"In a democracy it is our right to choose leaders who can serve but we should not be doing this like changing clothes," he said.

He said it is a fact that letting a leader rule for too long with unrestricted powers can bring bad consequences.

This was evident in the reign of Hitler, who at first developed the country and then led it to destruction, and the undemocratic actions of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein which sparked off the Gulf crisis, he added.