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LEAD Mahathir-Settlers

DON'T BE EXTRAVAGANT, MILLIONAIRE SETTLERS TOLD

CHANGLUN, Oct 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised settlers with new found riches, especially those who became millionaires overnight after selling their land for development projects not to be extravagant.

He said they must invest substantial part of the money for their future and that of their families.

"I would not want to see them as they were, living in abject conditions and looked down upon by others just because they do not know how to manage their riches," he said when officiating the 40th anniversary of Felda settlers and launching the "Yayasan Peneroka Negera" (National Settlers Foundation) at Felda Bukit Tangga, near here.

Dr Mahathir said it would be all right if they wanted to buy things but a substantial part of the money must be used for something more worthwhile.

"If possible, invest 95 per cent of the money ... now, we have many ways of investing, in unit trust schemes, savings and even spending for our children's education is also a form of investment.

"If we use the money as capital to plan for better future, then we will be safe or else we will be in trouble," he said, referring to 400 settlers of the L.B.Johnson Felda Land Scheme, near Seremban, Negeri Sembilan who reportedly became millionaires overnight after selling their land for development projects.

Dr Mahathir said they must control the urge to spend the money to avoid regrets later.

"My advice to them is don't be in a hurry to spend the money. It is all right if you spend a little but invest the rest in assets like a house or a shophouse which later can be rented out," he said, adding that if they wanted to own cars, they could buy Perodua (Kancil), not some luxury cars.

On the other hand, he said if they invested RM1 million at 10 per cent per annum, they would receive RM100,000 a year or between RM8,000 and RM9,000 a month.

" ... It is half the salary of the Prime Minister. From this money, they can buy car or whatever they desire. But if the RM1 million is spent all at once, they will have no more money and the items they bought will not last forever," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government would not stop settlers from selling their land if they received good offers but they must know how to value the riches they would get and determine their future source of income.

But, he said settlers who still own their land would continue to own capital for their future.

For those wanting to sell their land, they should take time to think it over whether it was worth years of toil since joining the land scheme as settlers, he said.

"Don't just think of today only. We must think for the long term," he said, adding that they should feel grateful for the success of Felda land scheme without losing sight of their future.

During the function, Dr Mahathir presented land titles to more than 2,000 settlers from nine Felda land schemes nationwide.

He also received a RM1.01 million contribution for the Yayasan Peneroka Negara, a foundation set up to help settlers and their families in need of financial assistance.

Present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Land and

Cooperative Development Minister Datuk Osu Haji Sukam, Kedah Menteri Besar
Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid and Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan
Kassim. -- BERNAMA
MFJ ABG