

New loan scheme for low-income workers

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SHAH ALAM: A new loan scheme of up to RM20,000 has been introduced for plantation workers and those from new villages to enable them to buy low-cost houses or build their own homes.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the scheme - Housing Loan Scheme for Low-Income Earners - was open to those earning between RM500 and RM1,200 monthly and would be coordinated by the Housing and Local Government Ministry.

"Initially, the Government approved a loan sum RM7,500 for the scheme but this amount was found to be insufficient and it was then raised to a maximum of RM20,000.

"Under the scheme, there will be no interest imposed on the first RM10,000 loan. The remaining RM10,000 will be charged an interest rate of 4%," he told a press conference before closing the seminar on welfare and housing woes of estate and mining workers in Selangor at Dewan Jubli Perak here yesterday.

He added that the proposal,

which was brought to the Cabinet in March last year.

Samy Vellu, who is also MIC president, said the party had submitted 437 applications from estate workers from nine plantations in Selangor, who had their own plots of land, for the scheme.

"The introduction of this scheme should benefit plantation workers, who are seeking to own houses in Kundang, Kalumpang, Banting, Bukit Itam, Midlands, Bangi, Brimal, Kajang and Sungai Runcing," he added.

On the monthly wage issue for rubber tappers, which was rejected by the Malaysian Plantation Owners Association (MAPA), Samy said the matter had been discussed by the Cabinet last week.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has asked the Human Resources Ministry to submit a detailed working paper on the problem.

"I will also provide some input to the Ministry to say that it is not proper to base the workers' wages based on the amount of rubber they tap," he said.