

Najib: Felda settlers not treated as slaves
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has criticised the opposition for alleging that the government was treating Felda settlers as slaves without caring for their welfare.

He said that since Felda was set up 54 years ago, the settlers who did not have any land previously could now be proud and enjoy the benefits of their struggles.

"If the people say that we purportedly enslaved the settlers, which slave can afford to own 10 acres of land? Which slave owns a brick house or a semi-brick house or at least the front wall of the house is made of bricks?

"Fortune does not come on a silver platter, this is all because you chose the right government," said Najib, when addressing a gathering of settlers at the Felda Jengka 23 Bandar Jengka today.

Also present were the prime minister's wife, Rosmah Mansor, Menteri Besar Adnan Yaakob, Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Felda Chairman Mohd Isa Samad.

In fact, he said, the promise made by the opposition that they intended to dispose off 300,000 hectares of Felda plantation land to be given to the second and subsequent generations of Felda settlers would bring about catastrophe to the settlers.

"This is because 51 per cent of the investments in Felda Plantation belongs to Koperasi Pembangunan Felda with dividends being paid out at 14 percent to the settlers, which is much higher than the dividends paid out by the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and the unit trust.

"This dividend will no longer be available if it (the land) is given to the children and grandchildren. Actually, we have considered the interest and future of the settlers' children and grandchildren," he said.

Islamic struggles

The prime minister said government efforts in developing the settler community was based more on Islamic struggles rather than the struggles championed by the opposition.

"If we want to champion the cause of Islam, what type of Islam is it going to be? Poor Muslims? Those without land? (Those) with dilapidated houses? This is not the image of Islam championed by the government. We want an image that is strong and impressive in the eyes of the world," he said.

Meanwhile, Najib agreed to give special consideration on the payment of a Replanting Incentive Scheme to Felda settlers in the Kerdu state constituency, that is, Felda Jengka 22, 23 and 25.

He said the matter would be discussed by the Felda management with the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB).

At the function, Najib also opened the open air futsal pitch, Dewan Semai Bakti, broadband centre and performed the virtual ground breaking for the Felda Jengka 9 biomass factory.

- Bernama

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