

Deputy minister 'trashes' Buku Jingga over Felda
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Jimadie Shah Othman

A deputy minister today threw a copy of Pakatan Rakyat's policy document, the Buku Jingga, into a rubbish bin to vent his frustrations over the latter's criticism of the handling of the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda).

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Ahmad Maslan, whose portfolio includes overseeing Felda, did this in front of 1,300 settlers from all 317 land schemes during a special briefing, believed to be the largest ever, in Kuala Lumpur.

During his two-hour speech, Ahmad symbolically threw the Buku Jingga into a rubbish bin that was placed next to the rostrum.

Pakatan has consistently criticised the government's alleged mishandling of Felda funds and more recently, opposed the public listing of Felda Global Ventures Holding Sdn Bhd.

Journalists from Malaysiakini and another news portal, Merdeka Review, were barred from entering the hall at the Felda headquarters, where the event took place, but were allowed to cover a press conference later.

Buku Jingga is the election manifesto of Pakatan Rakyat and states that the coalition would begin implementing its election promises within 100 days of taking over Putrajaya.

Ahmad: Opposition claims are wrong

This includes handing over the 360,000 hectares of land held by Felda Plantations to the second generation of settlers or their children.

Asked about his dumping of the book into the rubbish bin, Ahmad, who is also Umno information chief, said he did it because what the opposition claimed was wrong.

First, the deputy minister said, the land was not owned by Felda Plantations as it does not own any land.

Ahmad added: "That is why I threw it into the bin in front of all the settlers, for the people must continue to go to the Land and Mines office to get the land. It is as if they (Pakatan) are district officers to give out land.

"Felda Plantations only manages the land and the ownership belongs to 'the big Felda (Felda Holdings)', after the government froze the giving of land (to settlers) since the 1990s.

"The said land is to assist the poor families. Hence the land cannot be given to the settlers' children. If we give to the settlers' children, the villagers will not be able to get their land."

Ahmad said another reason he threw the Buku Jingga into the rubbish bin was because "suddenly, there is a movement by the opposition to give the land to the settlers' children. Is this fair?"

Felda's profits from the proposed listing of Felda Global Ventures, he added, would be channelled back to the people and this would be "much better than what is stated in the book or the PAS welfare state concept".

