

# RM65M INITIATIVES FOR FELDA SETTLERS

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Interest-free loan, rental-to-deposit conversion scheme among plans announced by PM

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**B**RIGHTER days await Fel-da settlers and the young generation after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob yesterday announced a slew of initiatives worth RM65 million to boost their livelihoods.

Ismail Sabri said from the amount, Fel-da would set up a RM10 million revolving fund to provide more opportunities to entrepreneurs in the new generation of settlers to venture into business or boost business capacity.

"The interest-free loan is provided at a minimum amount of RM5,000 and a maximum of RM20,000, depending on the chosen package.

"Fel-da entrepreneurs who are interested can start applying from next month (August)," he said in a speech at the 2022 Fel-da Settlers Day celebration at Fel-da Rentam here yesterday.

Present were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed and Fel-da chairman Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh.

Fel-da, Ismail Sabri said, had introduced the Fel-da New Generation Housing (PGBF) scheme, which allowed the young generation of settlers to continue living in the Fel-da schemes.

"Today, I announce that the RM7.6 million monthly rentals paid by the 2,025 PGBF occupants and future rentals will be converted to deposits when they purchase the units.

"For instance, a 36-month rental amounting to RM10,800 will be used as a deposit to reduce the price of the house from RM90,000 to only RM79,200."

As part of efforts to assist the new generation of Fel-da settlers and simplify the financing process of building homes under the PGBF scheme, the prime minister



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob greeting Fel-da settlers at the 2022 Fel-da Settlers Day celebration at Fel-da Rentam in Bera yesterday. PIC BY FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG

said RM20 million would be allocated through the Housing Credit Guarantee Scheme.

"The funds will serve as collateral for the housing loans that will be taken by future borrowers. Therefore, they (the young generation) will no longer be required to provide any collateral until the fund is fully utilised."

On the improved PGBF scheme to resolve some housing issues in Fel-da areas, Ismail Sabri said 8,670 land lots had been identified, including 3,200 lots that he announced in Johor last March.

"The initiative will be implemented in Pahang, Johor, Negri Sembilan, Terengganu, Perak, Kelantan and Kedah. In the Bera parliamentary constituency, 250 lots have been identified at Fel-da Kumai and Fel-da Triang 1."

Ismail Sabri, who is Bera member of parliament, also stressed that the government and Fel-da had never sidelined settlers who were rubber planters and were aware of their concerns about the drop in rubber prices.

"I am here also to announce that Fel-da will set aside RM6.1 million from the funds for 2022 to take over the management of the rubber collection centre from FGV Rubber Industries Sdn Bhd.

"Through the acquisition, Fel-da and FGV Rubber Industries have reached an agreement to lower the factory operating costs by 23 sen per kilogramme for dry rubber with an additional 5 sen when they reach the monthly target. The 28 sen reduction will provide additional revenue amounting to RM11.2 million for 10,707 rubber planters."

Ismail Sabri had the crowd cheering when he announced a RM66,000 special development aid to be distributed to each of the 317 Fel-da schemes in the country to allow them to undergo a facelift and be equipped with better facilities, involving a total of RM21 million.

"Some of the Fel-da schemes require repairs. There is one (Fel-da scheme) where the drain has turned into a stream, so they need funds to repair and upgrade some minor infrastructure in the area. In conjunction with Fel-da's 66th anniversary this year, the RM66,000 will come in handy to carry out the necessary works."

In the education sector, Ismail Sabri said the Premier programme at MRSM Fel-da would be replaced with an Ulul Albab programme.

"The Ulul Albab programme will start next year, which will integrate the existing education programme with religious programmes, including tahfiz Al-Quran.

"MRSM Fel-da will be the eighth MRSM to adopt the programme, which will churn out a new generation of students who will excel in their professional fields and adhere to the Quran and Sunnah."

Ismail Sabri then got the crowd comprising some 15,000 Fel-da settlers on their feet when he announced that the RM500,000 cash prize for the winner of the Fel-da Village Excellence Award had been raised to RM1 million this year.

Fel-da Jengka 25 was named the winner.