

Consolidate small plots of land under cooperatives, says Dr M



Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad presenting Ramadan goodies to underprivileged families at Masjid Nur Al Naim in Makam Mahsuri in Langkawi yesterday. PIC BY HAMZAH OSMAN

LANGKAWI: Landowners here should consolidate small plots under cooperatives to venture into sustainable businesses, instead of selling them for short-term gain.

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was behind the island's transformation into one of the world's renowned tourism destinations, said Langkawi residents should treasure their lands as priceless long-term assets.

"Many lands on this island are left idle. When people come asking to buy (the lands), we are quick to sell them to become instant millionaires.

"Of course we are happy for a while, but after we spend all the money, we might end up not having a land and a home any more," the Langkawi member of parliament said in his speech before presenting Ramadan goodies to underprivileged families at Masjid Nur Al Naim in Makam Mahsuri here.

Dr Mahathir reminded

Langkawi folk to toil their lands for agriculture, livestock breeding or use it wisely as business capital.

"If their land is small, individual landowners should consolidate the land under cooperatives to venture into bigger and more sustainable business ventures.

"By doing this, the landowners will get to keep their land and generate a steady stream of income in the long term that will benefit their future generations."

Later in a press conference, Dr Mahathir said when he first came to Langkawi to serve as a medical doctor in 1956, the market price of land on the island was about RM200 for one 'relung' (2,877 square metres).

"After we granted duty-free island status to Langkawi, the price of land had skyrocketed and is now being sold at RM5 per square feet.

"Thus, many people were tempted to sell their land to become instantly rich."