

Indian Felda Settlers Grateful For Government Benefits
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HULU SELANGOR, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- The Sungai Tenggi Indian settlers are among the Indian Felda settlers nationwide who are grateful to the government for acknowledging their hard work and for the benefits they have received.

M. Letchumy, 72, considers the Felda settlement to be the most beautiful place to live and the fertile land which has supported her family since 1973.

"Although all my children live elsewhere and plead with me to live with them, I insist on living here alone. Everything I need is here, why should I move?," she told Bernama after receiving the second phase of payment to settlers' wives at Felda Sungai Tenggi here recently.

A total of 1,900 settlers' wives, including nine Indians, received RM5,000 each at the event.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had announced the RM1.689 billion windfall to be distributed to 112,635 settlers families nationwide upon the listing of Felda Global Ventures Holdings on the Bursa Malaysia.

He also recently announced RM400 as 'duit raya' to 103,597 settlers in the scheme.

As for P.Muthaiah, 65, the benefits proved the government cared about them and it also helped to change his family's perception of his choice of work.

"Previously, about 20 or 30 years ago, our relatives refused to visit us saying we lived in the jungle, that it was far and there were no facilities," he said.

With a monthly salary of RM60 in 1972 he went through many challenges to support a wife and six children, he added.

Muthaiah added that the area had undergone great development with tar roads instead of red earth in the 70s.

Agreeing with him, M. Letchumy, 62, said the government under Najib had proved that the "people first, performance now" slogan was not just an empty promise.

"Since he (Najib) became Prime Minister, Indians have received various benefits including education and business loans," she said.

Meanwhile, Hulu Selangor member of parliament P. Kamalanathan said the government had various plans, which were still in the planning stage, to further improve the lives of Felda settlers in the interior.

This included the two temples built in the area and plans to upgrade them soon, he added.

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