

**21st Century Transformation Brings Progress To Rural Communities – Najib  
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KUALA LIPIS, March 23 (Bernama) -- The 21st century development of rural areas under the concept of making available housing and economic projects is reflective of the transformation brought by the government to raise the livelihood of the rural communities to be on par with that of the urban people, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Saturday.

He said the transformation implemented by the Barisan Nasional (BN) government so far was to enable the rural communities to emerge from poverty and secure an income of RM1,000 and more a month.

"The modernisation concept has been successful whereby the landscape has changed in the rural areas, including in the Felcra, Felda and Risda plantations.

"We want the modern lifestyle in the cities to be brought to the rural areas, not just the physical development but also the comprehensive nature of the 21st century development," he said when opening the "Rimbunan Kaseh" integrated community project in Tanjung Besar, near here.

Also present were Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob, State Secretary Datuk Seri Muhammad Safian Ismail and director-general of the Implementation Coordination Unit in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shukry Mohd Salleh.

Najib said the project, an integrated community development with housing and agricultural projects for the rural people, was an ongoing effort by the government to look after the welfare of the people and alleviate poverty.

The RM37-million project was developed by IRIS Corporation Berhad with the cooperation of the state government and the State Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council (MAIP) to settle 100 poor families in the state on a 12-hectare site.

So far, 76 houses had been completed and 71 families moved into the houses from Dec 1 last year while the remaining 24 houses were expected to be ready in August or September.

"The Rimbunan Kaseh project here is the first to be completed after a decision was made on Feb 21 last year. Besides being implemented in a short time, it is regarded as a model for rural development in the 21st century," he said.

He said the success of the programme was a result of smart partnership among the federal government, state government and a private sector company in realising modernisation in a rural area.

Najib said the 100 houses were built through an industrial building system complete with electricity and clean water supply.

He said the Rimbunan Kaseh project was capable of meeting the needs of settlements, generate an economy and put into practice a high-technology farming method which promised a high productivity.

"For example, to cultivate the golden melon, one can use the Autopot technology and the harvest can be exported to Singapore. Here, too, we breed the Jade Perch fish from Australia which has high Omega 3 content and is worth RM80 a kilogramme in restaurants," he said.

The prime minister said the government still had various development plans for the people, especially in the rural areas.

As such, the support of the people for the BN must continue so as to ensure that these plans were implemented, he said.

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