

Najib Wants Felda to Be Economic Powerhouse

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said on Monday he wanted Felda to become an economic powerhouse that will continue to champion the plight of settlers into the next generation.

He said the desire of the government in setting up Felda was to not only champion the plight of the first-generation settlers but also the second and third generation and for another 100 years or more.

"It is for this reason that we developed Felda, we established FGV (Felda Global Ventures Holdings Berhad), we have taken all kinds of measures to make Felda an economic powerhouse," he said.

Najib spoke at the launch of the Kami Anak Felda (KAF) organisation, the Kesejahteraan Adiwangsa Felda book, the Wada-Kemboja humanitarian mission fund and the Prihatin Jantung Anda programme, here.

He said that the government wanted Felda, besides becoming an economic power house, to also become a political power house to ensure the continuity of Felda.

Najib said Felda, founded by second prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, would not have come about without political power.

He also said that the group which recently announced a declaration did not have any love for or endear themselves to Felda.

In fact, Umno leaders established Felda and championed the plight of settlers, he said, adding that he was confident the second and third generations of settlers would support the present government.

Najib said the settlers' support for the government was a strong basis for the government to develop Felda further and provide the settlers with more benefits.

He said Felda's success as a land development concept began with a leader who wanted to see the rural society develop.

He also spoke of Tun Razak's legacy of giving land to the landless, and of the 59 years of success that Felda has experienced since its beginning in Lurah Bilut, Pahang.

Najib said Felda had approved interest-free loans of RM1.41 billion for 41,429 settler families to repair their houses at a cost of RM40,000 per family.

The Prime Minister also said that some quarters were deliberately misconstruing things to put him and the government in a bad light.

He cited the issue of the Sultan of Johor, Sultan Ibrahim Almarhum Sultan Iskandar, apparently not

having shaken hands with him during a recent meeting that went viral.

"I was invited to the palace, had tea with the Sultan, and sat next to His Royal Highness in the car driven by the Sultan. I had already shaken hands with the Ruler. Do I have to shake hands again after alighting as well?" he said.

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