

Farmers told to change mindset

They should be involved from producing to processing to marketing stage, says PM

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BAGAN SERAI: Farmers should not stop at being mere food producers but they should also add value to their products, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Urging them to change their mindset, he said: "Farmers should be involved from producing to processing to the marketing stage."

They must be involved in the agriculture supply chain, he said at the national farmers day here yesterday where he also launched the National Agro-food Policy.

Najib said food security was a big challenge for the country.

Citing the massive floods in Thailand which nearly crippled its rice industry, Najib said Malaysia needed to strategise to secure its food supply.

"As such, I hereby announce a RM460mil allocation for flood mitigation project in Kerian," he said.

He also announced the construction of a new district hospital with 300 beds for Bagan Serai.

At a press conference later, he said phase one of the flood mitigation project would involve the construction of a bund along Sungai Kerian

and Sungai Kurau.

"The construction of a rock bund will be carried out to prevent sea water from seeping into padi farming areas," he added.

Later when visiting Felra Ijok in Selama, Najib announced a RM200mil allocation from Felra to allow 10,400 settlers to get interest-free loans to expand their homes.

"I am announcing this to prove that Felra is not going bankrupt as claimed by some quarters," he said.

Due to good financial management, he said Felra could afford to pay bonuses to settlers, besides offering *duit Raya* and education

assistance programmes.

He said settlers should emulate his father Tun Abdul Razak's hard-working and willingness to sacrifice attitude.

Despite suffering from leukemia, he said his father continued to work tirelessly without taking any sick leave.

"He did not tell my mother nor me, as the eldest son, about his sickness as he did not want us to worry," he said.

Saying he was touched by the settlers for not forgetting his father's sacrifices, Najib noted that yesterday was the 36th anniversary of his father's death.

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— DATUK SERI NAJIB TUN RAZAK