

AGREEMENT WITH AGROBANK

Muhyiddin: Financial aid for new generation of Felda settlers to own first home

SUNGKAI: Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin yesterday announced financial aid for the new generation of Felda settlers to help them own their first home.

He said Agrobank had agreed to extend the terms of the loan for the Felda New Generation Housing (PGBF) scheme.

"I know a crucial issue among Felda settlers is financing for Felda's new generation to own a home through the PGBF scheme.

"I want to share some good news. Agrobank has agreed to extend the terms of the loan and offer lower interest rates to eligible applicants. The loan rate is also 110 per cent higher than the house value of RM300,000.

"An MoU (memorandum of understanding) will be signed with Agrobank today to provide res-

idents with a loan facility to own a home," he said yesterday.

He was speaking at the opening of the national-level Felda Settlers Day event at Maktab Rendah Sains Mara Felda Trolak here.

Present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed; Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin; and, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Arthur Joseph Kurup. Also present were Felda chairman Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu and National Felda Settlers chief Sulong Jamil Mohamed Shariff.

PGBF was announced under the 2013 Budget. At the time, it entailed the construction of 20,000

houses in five years from 2013 so that Felda's new generations could own affordable homes. The project was implemented via the design-and-build concept using the Industrialised Building System method on 2,023ha of Felda land.

Muhyiddin said in recognition of the country's long-serving settlers, the government agreed to allocate RM200 million to upgrade and maintain agricultural roads in all Felda schemes.

"This project will increase settlers' production and, more importantly, reduce settlers' debt over time as they have had to bear the cost of repairing roads at their smallholdings."

He said to ensure settlers' children had access to better education, the government allocated

RM45 million to upgrade the Felda Semai Bakti Hostels in Kuala Lumpur, Johor Baru and Kuantan.

"I hope this will provide settlers' children with more comfortable homes and improve their education."

Muhyiddin, who is Pagoh member of parliament, said the government would continue to help produce successful entrepreneurs among Felda settlers.

"Felda's collaboration with Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) will identify 15 high-value entrepreneurial projects to be implemented on Felda land with the involvement of Felda settlers.

"The aim of this collaboration is to create 3,170 new entrepreneurs over five months using facilities at UPM's Faculty of Agriculture.

"I am confident that this col-

laboration will create new business and employment opportunities for the Felda community, thus increasing their income."

As a step towards strengthening Felda's financial position, Muhyiddin said he had formed a team to handle Felda issues, chaired by Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar.

"The team is working to identify the best way to ensure the financial viability of Felda to benefit the entire community. This team will present reports to me soon."

The Felda Settlers Day celebration was held with Covid-19 rules in place, with only 250 guests, including 110 settlers from 11 Felda regions. Muhyiddin's speech was broadcast live on television and was streamed at all 11 Felda regions to get the message across to all settlers.