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Orang Asli-Livelihood

ORANG ASLI ECONOMIC STATUS IMPROVING - SAYS MUSTAPA

JELI, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- Orang Asli lifestyles continue to improve, as many families enjoy modern facilities and some even own mini oil palm estates.

The National Economic Action Council Executive Director Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said the government allocated huge funds yearly to ensure the community benefited from infrastructure developments like electricity, water supply and roads.

"The federal government also provides special schools in the Orang Asli settlements to enable their children to receive proper education," he told reporters after visiting the "Sungai Long Jasa Murni Programme," here today.

In addition, their school uniforms and stationeries are also government sponsored, so the younger generation are better educated, he said.

The one-day programme, jointly sponsored by the Malaysian Armed Forces and the Southern Kelantan Development Board, included a RM1.5 million hitech mobile clinic.

About 500 people, mostly Orang Asli, from Manok, Pos Sungai Rual and Kalok village received free medical and dental treatment from two doctors and 23 military personnel.

Mustapa said about 70 Orang Asli families, comprising 400 people, in these settlements owned mini oil palm estates that could be harvested.

With these estates, the community need not migrate from one place to another in search of their livelihoods.

In another development, asked about Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that no general election would be held soon, Mustapa said Kelantan Umno is ready to face elections anytime.

Asked about reports that several Pas members would like to join Umno, he said if it is true, they could join any branches and the party is prepared to open new branches if the numbers are large.

This is a good sign for Umno and the party started to win their confidence through the federal government policies, he added.

-- BERNAMA

WM RAR VP