

K'tan PAS: Oil royalty panel an election gimmick
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Kelantan PAS has dismissed premier Najib Abdul Razak's decision to set up a special committee on oil royalty payments to three east coast states.

It has described the move as an election ploy that will also relieve the mounting pressure on the BN from outside and within the federal ruling coalition.

Mohd Amar Nik Abdullah, deputy commissioner III of Kelantan PAS told Malay daily Sinar Harian that the initiative was made after various quarters - including veteran Umno leader and Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah - had urged the federal government to resolve the issue before the next general election.

"Now they want to sweeten the hearts of Kelantan people with these promises to show their kindness, (just when) the general election is close," Mohd Amar was quoted as saying.

"For me, the (move is) a political gimmick to enable them not to pay oil royalty to the Kelantan people."

The state exco member said he expects the special panel to decide that Kelantan does not deserve the payment, so that the federal government can hide behind this.

"(Oil royalty) has been paid to Sabah, Sarawak and Terengganu all this while, but it was terminated when PAS ruled Terengganu.

"When Kelantan made the demand, the distance (from the oil wells to the Kelantan coastline) was disputed. This is all political gimmick."

Last Saturday, Najib had announced that the special committee will be chaired by former chief justice Abdul Hamid Mohamad.

Its members will comprise local and foreign legal experts, as well as representatives of the Pahang, Kelantan and Terengganu governments.