

K'tan pledge land titles to Orang Asli
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As campaigning for the Galas by-election enters the final lap, PAS today promised land titles to the local Orang Asli community, who make up a sizeable portion of electorate.

"Yes, we will issue land titles. The Orang Asli are not outsiders, they are the rakyat of Kelantan. So we will issue land titles to them," said Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat today.

Speaking at a press conference after a meeting with state economic development corporation officers in Lojing, Nik Aziz said the titles was already being processed.

However, he stopped short of giving a timeline, explaining that the state's various departments and agencies needed time to resolve the matter.

"I cannot just promise like that, only the officers can provide the details. This takes time as it involves the National Land Code and state enactments.

"But I set the policy and they will follow through," said Nik Aziz, who is also PAS spiritual leader.

At a ceremony in Orang Asli settlement of Pos Sandrop later, the Kelantan MB presented 75 Orang Asli families with certificates of participation in a 101-acre cluster housing scheme for Orang Asli.

Model for subsequent programmes

According to an official from the MB's office, the programme, the first of its kind in the state, will be a model for subsequent cluster housing programmes.

The land involved in the scheme will be eventually be gazetted as Orang Asli reserve land and put under the direct administration of the Lojing territory district officer.

azlanThe certificates of participation will be converted into land titles in due time.

At the ceremony, which also saw PAS candidate for the Galas by-election Dr Zulkefli Mohamad making his first foray into Orang Asli territory as candidate, the state government also appointed 54 community leaders for the Orang Asli settlements.

It is estimated that 66 percent of Orang Asli voted for BN in the 2008 general election, which saw PAS narrowly winning by a narrow margin of 646 votes.

Analyst speculates that PAS must ensure that it improves its standing among the Orang Asli community for it to secure the Galas seat.

However, it is tough going for PAS, as most Orang Asli are supportive of BN, particularly Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

The state government had earlier announced plans to gazette Orang Asli reserve lands and issue the natives with titles, though there has been no major development until today.

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