

BN promises RM15b for Kelantan
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The ruling Barisan Nasional coalition today offered a multi-billion-dollar sweetener to voters in Kelantan in a last-minute bid to wrest control from the Islamic opposition.
MCPX

Kelantan, the only state not currently under BN control, has been run by PAS for the last 18 years, but they retain it by a razor-thin majority and it is a key electoral battleground.

Deputy Finance Minister Awang Adek Hussin said the BN would set up a hydro-electric dam and a bio-valley project worth RM15 billion if it won Kelantan, state news agency Bernama reported.

"All these projects will bring not only economic development to Kelantan but also make available jobs for the people," he told Bernama.

"The hydro-electric project will also help with flood mitigation as the dam will help control the flow of water downstream," said Awang Adek, who is expected to become the next Kelantan chief minister if BN wins.

He told Bernama that national power company Tenaga Nasional wanted to develop the hydroelectric dam, while local automotive group Mofaz was interested in setting up the bio-valley project to cultivate herbs and breed livestock.

Government's main weapon

At the height of its power, PAS controlled Kelantan and neighbouring Terengganu state which it won in 1999 elections, but its goal of turning Malaysia into an Islamic state is credited with its loss of Terengganu in 2004.

The party has now adopted a more moderate stance, but the government's main weapon in the battle for Kelantan is the billions of dollars it promises to pump into the state, which is currently one of the nation's most impoverished.

The BN has already promised voters over RM10 billion in development aid in addition to a RM112 billion development plan launched last year for Malaysia's poor east coast states aimed at transforming places like Kelantan.

Voters will cast their ballots on Saturday.