

**Kubang Pasu: A Black Area Transformed Into An Education Hub**  
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JITRA (Bernama) -- The rapid development enjoyed by the people of Kubang Pasu is due to the relentless effort of the former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad who represented the constituency from 1974 to 2004.

The Kubang Pasu district in fact encompasses two Parliamentary constituencies, Kubang Pasu and Jerlun, with both being the strongholds of Barisan Nasional(BN) and two state seats Jerlun and Bukit Kayu Hitam.

Development is evident throughout the district and comparable with many of the nearby developed areas like Jitra and Changlun. Kubang Pasu is also the gateway to south Thailand through Bukit Kayu Hitam.

Kubang Pasu has certainly come a long way from a left out outback with one of the hamlets in the district, Sintok, located close to the Malaysia-Thai border denoted as a black area due to the Communist threat.

The head of the Malaysian Historical Association's Research Bureau in Kedah Mohd Kasri Saidon noted that Sintok was declared the most dangerous area during the height of the Emergency and was only declared safe in 1960.

Today, there are signs of development everywhere especially within the Kubang Pasu Parliamentary constituency that is dotted with many higher education institutions.

This transformation has been achieved through the efforts and meticulous planning of the BN government, and Sintok is now where the Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and many other educational institutions are located.

UUM's Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak noted that after being in existence for three decades, UUM has been growing rapidly and the spillover effects were being felt in the areas around Kubang Pasu.

"Now UUM has 33,000 undergraduates and postgraduates, a 1,200-strong academic staff and 1,600 administrative staff. UUM now offers 37 academic programmes for undergraduates and 68 programmes at the post-graduate level," he said.

Since the establishment of UUM, year by year more educational institutions have been cropping up in the Kubang Pasu district, especially within the constituency with the student community in the district being the dominant group.

Among the colleges include the Kedah Matriculation College, Malaysian Teachers Training Institute's Darulaman Campus, Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah Polytechnic and the Bandar Darulaman Community College.

The district also houses the Kubang Pasu Integrated Residential School, the Kubang Pasu Secondary Science School, the Mara Junior Science College and the Sultan Abdul Halim School.

Four training and skills centre are also located in Kubang Pasu - Jitra Industrial Training Institute, Jitra Youth Skill Development Institute, and Mara Activity Centres in Jitra and Jerlun.

With Dr Mahathir at the helm for 22 years from 1981, the Kubang Pasu district especially the constituency developed rapidly with many outsiders praising its transformation from a Communist infested area to an education hub.

Though, Dr Mahathir is now neither the prime minister nor the Kubang Pasu Parliamentarian the development continues under Datuk Mohd Johari Baharom, the deputy agriculture and agro based industries minister.

During GE13 on May 5, Mohd Johari will be challenged by PAS' Mohd Jamal Nasir for the Kubang Pasu constituency. The Jitra state seat will see PAS' Dr Rohani Abdul Muttalib taking on BN's Aminuddin Omar while the Bukit Kayu Hitam state seat will see incumbent BN's Datuk Ahmad Zaini Japar taking on Nasrul Omar Che Mansor (PKR). The Kubang Pasu constituency has 65,550 voters.

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