

**Affordable Houses For Rural Folk Planned - Mukhriz
Bernama
19 May, 2013**

PENDANG, May 19 (Bernama) -- The Kedah government planned to build affordable houses for people in the rural areas, including through the planned village scheme, said Menteri Besar Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir.

He said the move was in line with the pledge made by the Kedah Barisan Nasional (BN) to solve the housing problem of rural folk who had yet to own a house.

Mukhriz said the state government would identify land in certain areas to build 100 to 200 affordable homes and create planned villages (kampung tersusun) like the existing one in Changlun.

"If possible, we want to build houses under the planned village scheme in each district. One planned village in each district - this will enable rural residents to own such affordable houses.

"We have not discussed the matter in full. But I think we will do a pilot project to see whether this formula will be a success and well accepted," he said after a thanksgiving feast at the Penang Umno division office, here, Sunday.

Mukhriz said for those who had land but did not have a house, the state government would find a suitable approach or formula to solve the problem.

On problematic housing projects carried out by the previous PAS-led state government, he said the current state government would study the matter and review these projects before making any decision.

"We have to consider the locations, quality and costs. I don't want to be hasty in making a decision. We have to see first whether these projects can be saved or not

"As for funding, we can work it out but if there is no demand for houses in these projects due to geographical factors, we cannot do it as it would be a financial waste," he said.

On another development, Mukhriz said the state government would ask Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to give special attention to Kedah after the people had given BN the mandate to rule the state again.

He said Kedah had lagged behind in development and hence required the best formula to attract foreign investors and to create more employment opportunities.

With the assistance of the federal government, Kedah would be able to develop in tandem with the country's overall modernisation.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=950709>