

PM Launches Construction Of Houses For Homeless Flood Victims

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KUALA KRAI, Jan 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Thursday launched the construction of 138 houses standing on stilts as high as 2.4 metres (eight feet) for the people of Manek Urai Lama here who lost their homes in the recent floods.

He said one such house could be completed in 75 days, and that the project that was being implemented in stages was expected to be fully completed in a year.

"As the houses are built on stilts as high as eight feet and the ground below the house can be utilised, the overall size of one such house is 120.8 square metres (1,300 sq ft) and its value is RM48,000.

"One assurance is that these houses will not be affected by floods in the future," Najib told a news conference after handing over aid to flood victims at Sekolah Kebangsaan Manek Urai Baru.

More than 2,000 flood victims from the Kuala Krai district were present at the event. Also present were Kelantan UMNO Liaison Committee chairman and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed and Works Minister Datuk Fadillah Yusof.

UMNO Welfare Bureau chairman Datuk Seri Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim and Kuala Krai UMNO Division chief and Dabong state assemblyman Datuk Ramzi Ab Rahman were also present.

Najib had earlier gone on a walkabout at the site of the construction of houses for flood victims in Manek Urai Lama to have a first-hand look at the building of the houses on stilts and to present aid to several families there.

The prime minister said the houses to be built on the ground without stilts would be 74.3 square metres (800 sq ft) instead of 61.3 square metres (660 sq ft) as announced recently by the government and still have three bedrooms, a dining area, a living room, a toilet and a bathroom.

The first phase of the construction of houses would be for those who had their own land, he said.

For those who lived in squatter areas or on river reserve land, the federal government would seek state government assistance to approve sites on higher ground safe from the floods, he said.

Najib said the repair of flood-damaged houses would be undertaken at a maximum cost of

RM10,000 each.

"This work will be coordinated with the implementing agencies, such as the Works Ministry, Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) and the Rural and Regional Development Ministry," he said.

Meanwhile, Fadillah said the construction and repair of houses would be offered to contractors and workers with a good track record in the locality and registered with the CIDB.

"Kelantan has more than 1,600 Class F contractors qualified to undertake such construction and repair. We will give priority to these contractors.

"The construction and repair work will be monitored by federal and state Public Works Department engineers. We estimate that about 3,000 units of houses will be built in the states affected by the floods," he said.

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