

**All Rural Development Projects To Be Implemented Holistically - Najib  
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PEKAN, Dec 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said that all rural development projects will be implemented in a holistic manner to reduce the poverty rate and narrow down the development gap between the urban and rural areas.

The prime minister said this included providing the rural folks, including the Orang Asli community, with economic resources that could give them a permanent income besides basic amenities such as housing, water and power supply.

"We develop the rural community today not merely by approving certain projects such as building community halls, roads, power and water supply, but we see that these efforts must be carried out holistically or as a package.

"It means that we cannot provide houses only, because without the economic resources such development will not be complete, without water supply or interrupted water supply, it will not be a holistic development," he said.

Najib said this in his speech at the handing-over of keys to new houses to 102 Orang Asli participants of the Agropolitan Runchang, Agropolitan Pekan in the East Coast Economic Region Development Corporation (ECERDC) Runchang, here today.

The event was also attended by Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaacob and ECERDC chief executive officer Datuk Jebasingam Issace John.

Najib said the Agropolitan Pekan programme in Runchang, which he launched five years ago, was the best example of the implementation of the holistic development concept.

He said that besides being given a new three-room house, the participants were also given employment opportunities through the breeding of dorper sheep projects with a minimum income of RM950 per month.

In fact, Najib, who is also the member of Parliament for Pekan, said that the participants' settlements were also provided with public amenities such as a community hall, playground, futsal court, kindergartens and surau.

"This is a holistic programme because besides getting a more comfortable home and a more complete community life, we also guarantee them a monthly income," he said.

"If in the past their incomes were erratic, probably according to the season, but with the droper sheep breeding project today, the participants can earn RM950 per month," said Najib.

He said the income could be much higher if the participants redoubled their efforts and working hours, thus they could save and invest for the future with the income earned.

"To the Orang Asli community, I hope they can see this opportunity as the best chance to be part of the community in the mainstream of development.

"The government does not want the Orang Asli to be shut off or deprived from enjoying the benefits of national development, especially as the Orang Asli are staunch supporters of the Barisan Nasional (BN) government," he said.

At the function, the prime minister also announced a 12 per cent increase in the allowance for participants of the Pekan agropolitan in Runchang, raising the total income to RM1,064 per month and a special contribution of RM200 per family for schooling expenses of their children.

At the same time, Najib also called on the Orang Asli community to ensure that their children completed their schooling to ensure a better future.

The Pekan agropolitan project in Runchang was the first agropolitan project implemented by the ECERDC in the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) starting with the participation of 30 local Orang Asli.

The project is now participated by 102 participants with the breeding of the dorper sheep as their economic activity.

The agropolitan project is expected to be the biggest dorper sheep breeding hub in South East Asia with an estimated 25,000 sheep to be bred by the year 2020.

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