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Tok Batin seek upgrades, describing meeting with DPM yields positive response

GUA MUSANG: Orang Asli village heads, known as "tok batin," expressed satisfaction after their meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, as he responded positively to their demands.

Bidi Ronggeng, the leader of Kelantan's Orang Asli village heads, revealed that they had presented their requests for changes in development, infrastructure, and the economy to the deputy prime minister.

These demands represent the collective wishes of nearly 16,000 Orang Asli people in the state.

"First and foremost, on behalf of the Orang Asli community, I requested larger homes for us, as our current dwellings are too small for those with large families.

"Many of us are living with our mothers and brothers-in-law in cramped quarters, which is uncomfortable. Therefore, we are seeking larger homes that can accommodate more people," he said.

Bidi also requested the establishment of a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in Gua Musang to benefit Orang Asli children.

Kuala Betis village head Ibrahim Merijah called for the creation of a one-stop center for Orang Asli in Gua Musang and upgrades to infrastructure such as customary halls (dewan adat) and community halls.

"We hope the government will continue to prioritise the well-being of the Orang Asli community, including improvements to the water supply.

"It's worth noting that some of us still rely on river water for bathing due to the lack of a continuous supply of clean water in our villages," he added.

Following the meeting, Zahid promptly approved the establishment of the TVET college for the community, assuring that he would work to fulfill their other demands and engage relevant agencies such as Mara for further action.