

Elephant attack victims get new homes

By **Mohd Rafi Mamat** - February 10, 2023 @ 10:03am



Pahang Jakoa director Johari Alwi said in the first quarter of this year the Rural and Regional Development Ministry (KKDW) approved an RM300,000 allocation for 20 homes for repairs and refurbishments. - NSTP/RAFI MAMAT

KUANTAN: The Pahang Orang Asli Development Department (Jakoa) repaired 81 Orang Asli homes last year that needed refurbishment with an allocation of RM13 million.

Pahang Jakoa director Johari Alwi said in the first quarter of this year the Rural and Regional Development Ministry (KKDW) approved an RM300,000 allocation for 20 homes for repairs and refurbishments.

He said in addition 10 homes will be built for RM1.32 million with priority given to victims of natural disasters like storms, and flooding, as well as fires and elephant attacks.

The new homes that will be built will have three bedrooms, a toilet and a bathroom.

He said the government is constantly making efforts to help by providing homes for the Orang Asli community. In fact for homes that have been damaged, repairs are carried out throughout the year.

"Each year there are about 100 to 120 applications to repair homes from all over the state and since 2010 as many as 5,000 applications to own new homes have been received.

"On applications for new homes, priority is given to those who have suffered natural disasters such as having their previous homes razed by fire, damaged and destroyed by storms as well as elephant attacks just to name a few," he said when met at his office here, yesterday.

He said for this year there are two applications involving homes that were razed by fire and five houses which were adversely affected by the weather.

This also includes homes affected by elephant attacks in Kampung Simoi Baru, Pos Batau, Lipis, he said.

Johari said in the incident that took place on Dec 6 last year, an Orang Asli woman was killed after being trampled on by a wild elephant and also inflicted damage to the victim's house.

He said the new home costing RM66,000 will be built for the family at a new site which is safer and more comfortable. The construction will commence soon.

"The cost to repair the damaged home is around RM15,000, whereas building a new one costs RM66,000 a unit.

The increase in prices for raw building materials every year means not many new homes can be built and provided for the Orang Asli community.

"For two years, in 2021 and last year no new homes were built following the high cost of building homes compared to the price of RM56,000 that was offered. The decision was made to raise the price of building a new home to RM66,000 which was approved by the government.

"I am hoping that the Orang Asli community that has already received new homes from the federal and state governments appreciate such assistance. By right they are very lucky as many others do not have the opportunity to receive such benefits and assistance," he said.