

Perak squatter-free by 2012

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BATU GAJAH: By the end of next year, Perak expects to be free of squatter issues.

Senior state executive councillor Datuk Hamidah Osman said since Barisan Nasional took over the state two years ago, the state government had identified all the squatters in Perak.

"We have also identified ways to

overcome the problem. For now, some 30 per cent of the squatter housing problem has been resolved," she told reporters after presenting house keys to several former squatter families in Kampung Pisang here yesterday.

Hamidah, who is state Industry, Investment, Development, Entrepreneurship, Tourism, Women Affairs and Welfare Committee chairman, said the state government had identified almost 10,000 squatters

through a census carried out in 2009 at the district level.

The state government, she added had devised three methods to overcome the problem.

The first involves squatters living along rivers, roads and on railway reserves who will be relocated to government land.

The second involves lifting the squatter status for those who are already staying on government land.

The third method is arbitrating for

squatters who are staying on private property.

"The last method involves negotiation between the state government and the landowner, where the state will either pay compensation or provide an alternate site to the landowner to replace the existing one occupied by the squatters."

On the issue of "parachute" squatters who want to take advantage of the government's housing provision, Hamidah said the state government

would not be entertaining requests from new squatters any longer.

"We have finalised and closed the squatters list last year... we have marked their houses and are now already taking action to settle their problems.

"So requests by so-called new squatters will not be entertained anymore.

"The doors are shut on those attempting to cash in on the government's assistance programme."



Kampung Chindai fire victims trying to salvage what's left of their belongings yesterday. — NST picture by Ramli Ibrahim