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'Orang Asli will enjoy fruits of progress'

PEKAN: The government's efforts to take the country to greater heights will not sideline anyone, including the Orang Asli.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the government was committed to bring all communities into the national development programmes.

"We must ensure no groups or people are neglected from enjoying the benefits of national development, which we are doing.

"The Orang Asli community, too, will have equal rights to be at the centre of mainstream development," he said when addressing a people's gathering in Kampung Tasik Mentiga here yesterday.

Najib said the Orang Asli had always maintained their backing of the government.

"Their support for the government is unrivalled."

On another note, he said the Orang Asli had shown a marked im-

provement in their education over the years.

He cited the example of an Orang Asli student from Kampung Tasik Mentiga, who completed her studies to become a doctor.

"I hope she will be an icon for other Orang Asli here and others nationwide," he said.

He said the number of Orang Asli students who were offered places in public universities grew to 682 in 2013, up from 479 (2012), 408 (2011)

and 98 (2010).

. He said another 40 Orang Asli had furthered their studies abroad for their bachelor degrees, master's and doctorates since 2010.

"Their successes in education can inspire the younger generation from the community to equal or even improve on the achievements."

Najib granted an immediate approval of RM4 million for the construction of a bridge, which was requested by the village leader.