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# 'Govt won't ignore people's needs'

**PLEDGE TO DELIVER:** Bridging development gap between Sabah and peninsula is BN government's vision, says Najib

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**T**HE Barisan Nasional government will not lose sight of the people's needs and aspirations, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

This was what inspired the government to build the Pan-Borneo

Highway. In launching the Jalan Tawau-Sandakan package under the first phase of the project here yesterday, Najib said the government had a vision to bridge the development gap between the state and Peninsular Malaysia.

"The Pan-Borneo Highway is the single major project that will change the landscape of development in Sabah, and it comes with far-reach-

ing impact on the people," he said.

"Other projects are focused on a district, but not this one, because it will affect people from all over the state and, most importantly, there will be no toll."

The project to upgrade and build new routes in three phases, costing RM12.8 billion, is expected to be completed in 2022 and will stretch 1,236km.

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Najib said priority would be given to contractors in Sabah so that the benefits could be enjoyed by everyone in the state. It would also help build their capacity in completing major projects.

"On the part of the government, we will deliver our pledges to the people and this project is proof of that," he said.

Rest and recreational areas, as well as commercial lots, will be built along the highway to spur growth and generate economic activities.

"Despite the economic challenges and the drop in oil prices, we continued with the plan because we

manage the government administration well. We anticipate the needs of the people and prepare the funds for it, especially for those who have been supporting us all this while," Najib added.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman said the project, once completed, would set a path for development and progress in the state.

"The prime minister came here to deliver what he promised and this shows the level of his commitment to ensure the state is not left out of the development and progress that the government has planned for the nation."