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PM: Security **always** a priority

> Govt will use every means to safeguard people of Sabah, says Najib

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LAHAD DATU: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak said the government would continue to prioritise security in the Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone).

Previous efforts and commitment have been effective, he said, citing a recent case in which security forces killed three kidnapers in a shootout on Dec 5.

He attributed the latest success to a tactical change by the Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCom).

"We hope this will serve as warning that we are very serious and will use every means to safeguard the people in Sabah, particularly here in the east coast," he said after launching the Pan Borneo Highway Lahad Datu Bypass here yesterday.

Also present were Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan and Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

In the Dec 5 incident that happened at about 9pm, Malaysian security forces killed three cross-border criminals and nabbed two others after a shootout off Pulau Gaya in Semporna.

The perpetrators had kidnapped

a local fisherman who was fishing in the area at the time.

In his speech, Najib acknowledged the important role played by the local community in helping to keep the state secure, Bernama reported.

"As we know, among the roles that the residents could play in this regard is to provide information to security forces and secondly, to refrain from giving any support to parties that have bad intentions.

"If these parties fail to get any support from the residents, they would find it hard to move about and would not know the whereabouts of our security forces. That's why the role of the people is so important," he stressed.

The prime minister also noted the progress of the Royal Malaysian Air Force Forward Operations Base project in Lahad Datu, aimed at reinforcing ESSCom's assets.

He said he was informed by the Defence Ministry that the project was scheduled to be completed in October 2017.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the RM16 million project on a 0.48ha site at the Lahad Datu Airport was officiated by Najib in May.



Najib with Musa (left) and Fadillah looking at an exhibit during the launch of the Pan Borneo Highway Lahad Datu Bypass yesterday.