

**Najib says Sabah now richer than Kelantan**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**February 18 , 2012**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 18 — Resource-rich Sabah has lifted itself off the bottom rung and relegated Kelantan to being the nation's poorest state, Datuk Seri Najib Razak was reported as saying by The Star today.

"Sabah is now a state with so much potential," the prime minister was quoted as saying during the launch of the Mini Estet Sejahtera (Masej) scheme near Lahad Datu.

According to Najib, per capita income in the East Malaysian state has crept past Kelantan and was almost on par with the national average.

He further noted that the number of households categorised as hardcore poor has been reduced to 7,000 now, down from 30,000 previously. The report did not specify the exact time period.

The prime minister credited the economic progress to federal-state co-operation, and pointed to the Masej as an example of such efforts.

Masej was funded using RM22 million from Felda, which is on top of another RM50 million the land authority had provided to Sabah.

Sabah has languished at the foot of Malaysia's prosperity ladder despite its natural resources, primarily oil and gas.

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