

**Sabah Will Always Be A Priority, Assures Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak made an assurance that Sabah will always be a priority in Malaysia's development and hoped the people of the state would continue supporting him towards that objective.

The Prime Minister said he was also committed to repay the spirit of unity brought by the eastern friends to the nation, the same as his late father Tun Abdul Razak Hussein in merging North Borneo with Malaysia, for mutual benefits.

"For the past 49 years, Sabah has contributed a great deal to Malaysia's growth. Last year, the state's tourism sector generated almost RM5 billion for the country's economy, with the arrival of more than 2.8 million visitors, up 13.6 percent from 2010.

"On the whole, Malaysia depends on Sabah's contribution very much and therefore, the government places importance on the state's welfare through the Government's Transformation programme," he said in the latest entry on his blog www.1Malaysia.com.my, titled 'Sabah in Malaysia - A Win-Win Situation', Friday.

He said the government was working towards improving Sabah's electricity supply and develop MASwings from a community service airline to a regional service covering Sabah and Sarawak.

Due to the government's continued efforts through the Rural Infrastructure, National Key Results Area (NKRA), the roads in East Malaysia formed 54 percent of the nation's road network, he added.

"The rural poor have also received thousands of new or repaired houses, all equipped with basic facilities to enhance their quality of life.

"On the whole, the Rural Infrastructure NKRA has benefited Sabah with an expenditure of RM3 billion," he said.

Najib, who is scheduled for a one-day visit to Sabah Saturday said he was reminded of his visit to Balai Wayoh in Bingkor, Sabah recently, which was also visited by his late father in 1963.

He said Bingkor was the venue for the important treaty between Tun Abdul Razak and Dusun leader OKK Sedomon, which welcomed North Borneo into Malaysia as Sabah.

"My late father had great respect for OKK Sedomon, so much so that he referred to him as 'Bapak' (father).

"Certainly, the treaty played a pertinent role in making Malaysia the second largest economic power in Asean," he said.

Najib said the merging of North Borneo with the Federation of Malaysia was not sealed without prior deliberation because to begin with, the Cobbold Commission was set up to gauge the people's agreeability on the merger.

A 20-point agreement was also formulated by North Borneo to present their conditions for the merger, among them issues such as the official religion, official language and immigration affairs, he said.

"What is more important, the Malaysian Constitution was completely re-drafted to take into account the entry of North Borneo as Sabah and to prevent any amendment or abolishment of Constitutional rights accorded to the state, except if requested by the people in the state themselves, he said.

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