

**Government Makes Good On Pledge To Build Expressway In Kelantan - Muhyiddin
Bernama
1 Apr, 2014**

KOTA BAHARU, April 1 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today officiated the groundbreaking ceremony of the RM1.8 billion Kota Baharu-Kuala Krai Expressway, one of the seven pledges made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak when he visited Kelantan on Jan 20, last year.

Muhyiddin said the implementation of the project was a testimony of the federal government's commitment to honour its "promises fulfilled" slogan.

"This have clearly proved that the pledges made by the prime minister during his visit to Kelantan before the 13th general election (GE-13) will be fulfilled, even if they have to be implemented in stages.

"Certainly, we will not stop here (the groundbreaking ceremony), but will carry the project through until the completion of the expressway," he told reporters after officiating the groundbreaking ceremony of Package 1B of the 73.5 km Kota Baharu-Kuala Krai Expressway here today.

Package 1B of the expressway entails building a stretch between Pasir Hor and Kadok, the first of the three phases of the project costing RM168.5 million.

The seven km stretch is expected to be completed in three years' time in April 2017.

Muhyiddin said even how much time was needed to complete the expressway, the federal government would ensure its completion as the project was longed for by the people of Kelantan.

"That is why the prime minister made the commitment and we are implementing it now," he said, adding that the expressway would be toll-free.

On the PAS-led Kelantan government's proposal to build a similar expressway, Muhyiddin said although the state government had stated its readiness to cooperate on the project with the federal government preparing the alignment, so far there was no discussion about it.

"I was told there is a development phase which will be implemented by the state government. We hope they can implement it, but the federal government had done its part. It is up to the state government's discretion to implement it," he said.

Muhyiddin said the Kota Baharu-Kuala Krai Expressway project would continue until the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP) and the 11MP.

The deputy prime minister said the federal government would not prevent the state government from implementing infrastructure projects, instead it would lend its support as they would benefit the people.

On six more pledges made by the prime minister, Muhyiddin said it would be implemented based on pressing needs and priorities and they would be announced by Najib himself.

The projects are a new stadium, the state's largest mosque, people's housing, Rapid Transport System in Kota Bharu, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) city campus that could accommodate 5,000 students, and projects to solve water woes.

Earlier, in his speech, Muhyiddin, who is on a one-day visit to Kelantan, said 77 of 116 development projects carried out by the federal government under the 10MP with an allocation of RM2.5 billion had been completed while the remaining 39 projects were in design, procurement and construction stages.

He said 50 of the 116 completed projects were roads and bridges.

"The responsibility of the federal government is not only confined to constructing and upgrading of roads, but also ensuring road users' security and convenience, for which it allocates RM26 million per annum to maintain 1,261.22 km of federal roads in Kelantan," he said.

Muhyiddin said as part of the Central Spine Road (CSR) project under the East Coast Economic Region (ECER), the Kota Bharu-Kuala Krai Expressway, when completed, would open a new chapter in terms of communication network, accessibility and mobility in Kelantan.

Meanwhile, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said Kelantan would be on par with other states in terms of road network with the completion of the entire package of the expressway by 2020.

"People of Kelantan are thankful as finally, we will have our own expressway," he told reporters after performing a hajjat prayer at the Kelantan Umno Headquarters here last night.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=1026813>