

**Federal Government Assures Empowerment Rights of Sarawak – Najib
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BINTULU, Jan 31 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the federal government gives its assurance that it will hand over the empowerment rights of Sarawak to the state government.

The Prime Minister said the talks would only involve the federal government and the Barisan Nasional (BN) state government headed by Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem.

"I have no intention of taking Sarawak's rights. We can give them back, if we have taken them," he said at a meet-the-people gathering which was attended by more than 15,000 people here, today.

He said the federal government would not conduct any talks with parties other than the Chief Minister although some quarters claimed they were fighting in the interest of Sarawak's rights.

On the the 11th State General Election (PRN) this year, Najib said the construction of the Batang Lupar bridge in Sri Aman would be made part of BN's pledge.

"It will be a manifesto of Sarawak BN to be implemented," he said.

"The financing is done jointly by the federal government and state government, with the federal government contributing 50 per cent and state government, 50 per cent," he said, adding the cost of the project had yet to be determined.

He said the Batang Lupar bridge project was set to boost the economy of villages along the coast of Sarawak.

"We have big plans for Sarawak, not just political rhetorics, we have delivered and (will) continue to deliver," he said when referring to the RM16 billion Pan Borneo Highway project which was being implemented.

He also gave his assurance that dilapidated schools in the interior of Sarawak would be repaired besides giving his commitment to enter the pledge in the BN manifesto.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem said the state government agreed with the suggestion

of the federal government to jointly build the Batang Lupar bridge which would become the longest in Malaysia upon completion.

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