

**Najib: Pan Borneo Expressway Proves Government's Seriousness to Develop Sarawak, Sabah**  
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SERIAN (Sarawak), March 13 (Bernama) -- The Pan Borneo Expressway, costing more than RM16 billion, is a testament of the government's seriousness in fulfilling its promises to develop Sabah and Sarawak, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said what was needed was continuity in the state administration so that efforts by the government to develop the local community could continue.

The expressway, he said, was not just a gift for Sarawak, but also a testimony for the government's earnestness to implement its election promises.

Although the price of the country's prime commodity has dropped, but because of the determination to fulfill the promise to the Sarawak people, the expressway project will proceed, he said in his speech to launch construction of the expressway for the 75km package between the Serian roundabout and Simpang Pantu here today.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem and Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Alfred Jabu Numpang.

The Pan Borneo Expressway, stretching 2,325km, will serve as a communication backbone in Borneo, from Telok Melano in Sarawak to Tawau in Sabah.

For the Serian route, it involves upgrading of the single carriageway to a dual carriageway, including the construction of three elevated intersections in Serian and Simunjan.

Najib said theoretically, the amount spent by the government for the construction of the expressway would bring eight-fold benefits to the people.

"This is the impact of the project in terms of economy to the people of Sarawak. This development serves not only as a catalyst to the people's economy, but also a game changer for the country.

"It will bring huge transformation to Sarawak, making it the only huge project that cannot be compared with any projects in the country before this," he added.

The prime minister is scheduled to return to the federal capital after a walkabout in Pekan Bau later today.

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