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# It's a no go if people affected

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## Najib lays down criteria before Govt agrees to reclamation plan

**BALIK PULAU:** The Federal Government will not support reclamation plans off the south of Penang island if the local community's interest is affected, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak laid down three criteria for the Penang South Reclamation Scheme (SRS) to be able to get Federal approval.

Firstly, the project must not bring hardship to the fishermen in the area, he said, adding that the project must also be environment-friendly.

He called for a cost-saving alternative to be considered too.

"This project is like putting sand into the rice bowls of the 1,500 fishermen here. If that is the case, the project should not be carried out.

"I say to all the fishermen ... do not despair. If your livelihood is at stake, we will not agree to it," he said in his address at Politeknik Balik Pulau here yesterday.

The Prime Minister said the stance of the Federal Government should not be misconstrued as one with a political motive.

"If we have been doing so, then we won't be bringing in so many development projects to Penang," he pointed out.

SRS is a massive plan to reclaim three islands totalling 1,800ha off the southern coast of Penang.

The success of the Penang Transport Masterplan, the state government's multi-billion ringgit public transport project involving



**Grand welcome:** Najib greeting attendees at the Jamuan Rakyat event at Politeknik Balik Pulau. — Bernama

light rail transit, monorail, cable cars and water taxis, depends on funding from property development on the islands.

The environmental impact assessment (EIA) of SRS was recently completed and is now awaiting Federal approval.

The EIA acknowledged the value of the seabed, where the islands are proposed to be reclaimed, as a breeding ground for jumbo-sized prawns.

At the event, Najib presented a total of RM4.5mil to the 1,500 fishermen as cost of living allowance.

He earlier arrived to a grand welcome at the event themed Jamuan Rakyat, with the crowd cheering, singing and waving mini Jalur Gemilang.

Also present were Penang Barisan Nasional chairman Teng Chang Yeow, Penang Umno chairman Datuk Seri Zainal Abidin Osman, Balik Pulau Umno division chief Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahya and Penang MCA chairman Datuk Tan Teik Cheng.

Later, Najib launched the golden jubilee celebrations of SMK Seri Balik Pulau.

His father, the late Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, opened the school in 1969.

Najib toured the school and browsed through some of its historical documents, photographs and viewed a video presentation of the school.

"I would like to congratulate the school for its 100% success rate in the STPM exam," he added.

Watch the video  
[thestartv.com](http://thestartv.com)

