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'FAIR'

## Critics of aid for fishermen taken to task

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**LANGKAWI:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday lashed out at those who criticised the government for giving financial aid to the people.

"What is wrong with giving RM300 a month to fishermen? Are their lives easy?

"They are battered by waves in rough seas, drenched in rain and, at times, unable to go out to sea.

"So, when we collect the Goods and Services Tax, a little of that we give to the fishermen, small farm owners and others like them.

"This is only fair. This is not *dedak*... it is not bribery. This is a government who knows how to take care of its people. If you don't want to help the people, don't say it is *dedak* (when we do). If you don't want to help fishermen, don't say it is bribery."

Najib was speaking in Pulau Tuba, near here, at the official

launch of a RM46 million project that saw submarine electric cables laid between here and the island, which is the only other one populated.

He also announced more than RM1.5 million worth of projects for the development of Pulau Tuba.

Najib said he had approved a special RM800,000 allocation to repair the 800-odd houses on the island, which had a population of 5,000 people, mostly fishermen and their families.

On top of the allocation, he also announced that Tenaga Nasional Bhd would be taking on several projects, including the construction of a RM690,000 jetty in Tanjung Pandan on the island, the rewiring of 30 houses currently in bad shape (RM60,000) and the installation of 38 lampposts for the island.

Najib did not provide the cost of the construction of the lamp-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak being greeted by Pulau Tuba residents in Langkawi yesterday. PIC BY DANIAL SAAD

posts, but he said they would be equipped with LED lights.

At the announcement of each project, residents and guests at

the official launch cheered loudly. However, the biggest cheer was saved for the last.

"Next year, we will build a mini-

stadium. I will include this in the 2018 Budget," he said prompting much applause.