

**One-Off RM500 Aid for Rubber Tappers, Smallholders This Ramadan - PM
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BATU PAHAT, June 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Thursday announced a one-off aid payment of RM500 for 43,000 rubber tappers and smallholders nationwide this Ramadan.

He said the aid, proposed by the Rural and Regional Development Ministry, could help lessen the financial burden of tappers who did not own any rubber smallholding and the smallholders affected by the current low rubber price.

"The one-off payment of RM500 will be made this Ramadan through the Rural and Regional Development Ministry," said the prime minister at the presentation of the National-Level Excellent Village Awards 2013 in Kampung Parit Haji Ali, Mukim 8 Sri Gading, in Batu Pahat.

Also present were Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

Najib also announced that the ministry would be replacing the award (Anugerah Desa Cemerlang) with the Anugerah Desa Sejahtera 1Malaysia from this year.

He said the award would be divided into four categories, namely, Kampung Tradisional (Traditional Village), Kampung Baru Cina (Chinese New Village), Kampung Orang Asli (Orang Asli Village) and Rumah Panjang (Longhouse).

The award, he said, which emphasised on village wellbeing and the strength of its village security and development committee, would be given out next year.

Najib then handed out the Anugerah Desa Cemerlang 2013 to the winners, with the champion receiving RM225,000, runner-up RM175,000 and third placed, RM115,000.

The champion was Kampung Parit Haji Ali (Johor), runner-up Kampung Jelai (Perak) and third, Kampung Kuala Kerik (Kedah).

The winners in the other categories which received RMM60,000 each were Kampung Batu 23, Sungai Nibong, Selangor (economy), Kampung (F) Sungai Koyan 2, Pahang

(ICT), Kampung Tok Dor, Terengganu (cleanliness, health and cheerfulness), Kampung Seri Serbang, Sabah (Independence celebration), Kampung Gadek, Melaka (leadership), Kampung Gong Kulim 1, Kelantan (spirituality and patriotism) and Kampung Besar, Penang (education).

Also receiving RM60,000 each in the Desa Harapan (promising village) category were Kampung Gebok (Negeri Sembilan), Kampung Padang Besar Selatan (Perlis), Kampung Bukit Kuda (Labuan) and Kampung Pejuang Kelulut (Sarawak).

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