

# 'Dons must be proactive'

**INNOVATION:** Higher learning institutes can provide solutions to issues, says Najib

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**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday called on academicians to play a more proactive role in efforts to boost the country's wealth.

Cooperation between industry players and scholars, he said, could lead to enhanced wealth generation.

"As the nation aims to generate wealth (for the people), institutions of higher learning can be a referral point, providing innovative solutions," he said before presenting the 2013 National Academic Awards yesterday.

As an example, Najib said, small and medium enterprises should be able to refer to academicians who were awarded funding to find innovative solutions.

Najib also urged academicians to build more repositories of knowledge in this country.

"We wish to churn out more genuinely educated individuals and not merely those with academic qualifications.

"This is our legacy for our children and grandchildren."

Najib said as the country strove to build a stronger economy, it would need qualified manpower capable of being part of Malaysia's



**Datuk Seri Najib Razak** presenting the Tokoh Akademik Negara 2013 award to **Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Mohd Rashdan Baba** in Putrajaya yesterday. With him is **Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin** and **Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh**. Pic by Mohd Fadli Hamzah

transformation process and competitive enough to face fierce global competition.

"This should be a source of inspiration to us because scholars, scientists and academicians are one of the main pillars of national development," he said.

Najib also hoped that the national academic award would spur scholars further.

"Academicians may view their contributions as small, purely as a career, as work or to meet their Key Performance Indicators (KPI), respectively, but in reality, it is a legacy for our children and grandchildren," he said.

Present were Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Second Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh and Deputy Education Ministers Datuk Mary Yap

Kain Ching and P. Kamalanathan.

Earlier, Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said the National Academic Awards was to recognise academicians who had excelled in their fields.

He said aside from scholars, the awards committee also recognised the contributions of researchers, authors, entrepreneurs and those in the arts and creative industries.

"When it first started eight years ago, the grand prize for the 'Tokoh Akademik Negara' was only RM80,00, but from 2012, the prize was increased to RM200,000.

"For the other categories, the recipients now get RM50,000, compared with RM20,000 in the early years.

"We have also opened up nominations to all higher education

institutions, including polytechnics, community colleges and colleges," he said.

"Tokoh Akademik Negara 2013" recipient, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Mohd Rashdan Baba, said all quarters must play their part in the nation's development, especially in the education sector.

The former Universiti Putra Malaysia vice-chancellor said it was crucial to create a knowledgeable, educated and self-reliant younger generation.

"They must be taught to love the country and be able to give back to society based on what they have learnt," said the 79-year-old, who also played a key role in the nation's first privatisation exercise, involving Telekom Malaysia Berhad.

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