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Two teenage essay winners to meet PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Two students from the Federal Capital will get to see Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at his office on Aug 29 and hand over their essays to him.

This is in conjunction with a contest organised by the New Straits Times and Coca-Cola Malaysia between Aug 1 and 21, where students between the ages of 13 and 18 were encouraged to express their hopes, dreams and aspirations for the nation.

Apart from getting to see the country's top leader, the two teenagers will each receive a grand prize of RM5,000.

The contest, which was also held in celebration of the country's 44th Merdeka Day, was divided into two categories - lower secondary (Forms One to Three) and upper secondary (Forms Four and Five).

"It was difficult choosing the winners. Most of them were really good!" said Coca-Cola Far East Limited external affairs director Mohamed Kadri Mohamed Taib.

The judges, comprising Mohamed Kadri, Eric Pringle Associates Public Relations Sdn Bhd director Philip Chan, YouthQuake co-ordinator Hisham Harun and two YouthQuake contributors, Ram Ganeson and Tan Sher Li, spent two hours reading the 40 short-listed entries (20 from each category), and another two hours to pick out the winners last Friday.

Mohamed Kadri said they were very happy with the response.

"We received about 250 entries, mostly written by students from the top schools in Kuala Lumpur.

"Some of them were really interesting; an indication that our teenagers have very good ideas as to how a country should be run."

The entries were written in English and points were given for substance (ideas), logic, practicality and language.

"A lot of praise was accorded to the Prime Minister and in almost all of the entries, we could feel the honesty in them. But we were looking beyond this," said Hisham.

"We wanted to see how creative, forward thinking and maybe even visionary, our students are."

He also said that most of the letters received were well-written and issues such as education, environment, unity and family were the ones mostly highlighted.

Excerpts of several shortlisted entries, including the winning ones will be published in YouthQuake, on Friday, Aug 31.

The winners will also be notified soon.

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