

PM, Australian professor honoured

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat — Malaysia needs to nurture a culture of scientific enquiry to better nurture technological innovations, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He said an environment that promoted different views encouraged innovation. "The most common barrier to innovation is inside-the-box thinking, caused by limited perspectives and mindsets that are closed to new ideas.

"For innovation to flourish, we need people who can see things from different viewpoints and diverse perspectives," he said in accepting an honorary fellowship conferred by the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) at the Palace of the Golden Horses tonight.

"We need an environment in which these perspectives and insights can be ex-

changed in an open, honest and supportive manner."

Abdullah said Malaysia would not achieve Vision 2020 if it did not enhance the capacity to innovate and create at all levels of society.

ASM also conferred an inaugural Award for Scientific Excellence in Honour of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Dr John Sheppard Mackenzie.

Mackenzie, who is professor of Tropical Infectious Diseases at the Curtin University of Technology of Australia, was recognised for his work in emerging tropical diseases in the region such as the Japanese encephalitis virus, avian influenza and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome virus.

Present at the dinner were Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah, Dr Mahathir and Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Jamaludin Jarjis.



FOR EXCELLENCE IN HIS FIELD: The King handing the Award for Scientific Excellence to Mackenzie (right) while Abdullah and Dr Mahathir look on.