

'Don't make Bahasa Malaysia a decoration'

NST-20/7/2007

KUALA LUMPUR: Bahasa Malaysia should not be sacrificed in the pursuit of "global" citizenry, Raja Muda of Perak Raja Dr Nazrin Shah said yesterday.

He said it should not be "mere decoration" as language was one of the primary factors that gave identity to race and nation.

"The language that has been installed as the national language should not be made a mere decoration.

"It is of no meaning if it is only written in one paragraph of the constitution.

"Bahasa Malaysia should be given life, a breath and injection of values and worth," he said in his speech at the opening of a seminar on *bahasa rojak*, or the adulteration of the Malay language.

Raja Nazrin, accompanied by his wife Raja Puan Besar Tuanku Zara Salim, commended Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) for being a key contributor in ensuring that Bahasa Malaysia remained a dynamic force in the country.

He said inter-cultural influences on

language occurred at rapid speed due to modern communication processes.

Bahasa Malaysia, he said, had seen numerous influences throughout the ages.

It was influenced by three waves — the Indian, Islamic-Arabic and Greek and ancient Roman cultures — developing into a vibrant and relevant language kept in check by local "warriors of language".

Raja Nazrin said he hoped the seminar would discuss ways and efforts to preserve the beauty and orderliness of

the language.

"In looking for ways to ensure there is no adulteration in the use of language, it is also more important to save the nation's minds from adulteration."

DBP director-general Datuk Dr Firdaus Abdullah said the issue of the corruption of Bahasa Malaysia, or *bahasa rojak*, had been debated.

Firdaus said: "As the body responsible for efforts to strengthen Bahasa Malaysia as the national language, DBP has to establish clear guidelines on the proper use of the language."