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A chance to pen your views

Perdana Contest encourages new ideas and thoughts in shaping nation's future.

DO you have a clear vision of what Malaysia should be like in 50 years? Or a strong opinion on youth and leadership in our country?

Put your views into writing and stand a chance to drive home the grand prize of a Chevrolet Aveo sedan, besides pocketing RMI1,000 in cash, RM500 MPH Book vouchers and a two-week work placement stint.

Organised by the Perdana Leadership Foundation (PLF), the Nurturing the Minds of Future Leaders essay competition 2008, is open to all Malaysian secondary school and undergraduate students.

The foundation is committed to encouraging analytical thought on and research into issues of national leadership, as well as deepening interest in the nation's past, present and future.

Participants must be no younger than 13 years of age, or older than 21, as of the contest deadline on June 30.

Malaysian students attending secondary or tertiary institutions abroad are also eligible to participate.

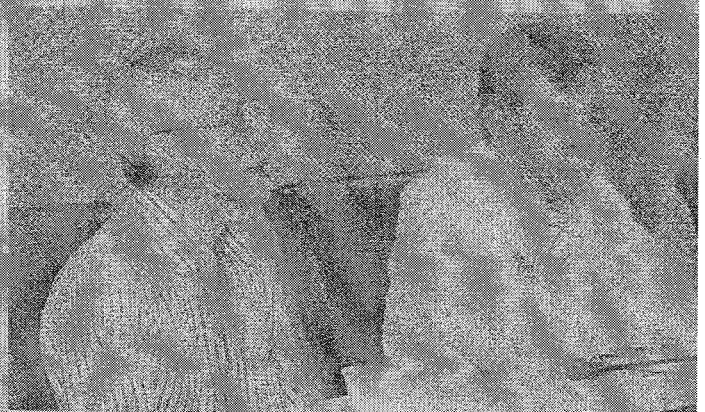
However, their respective institutions will not be eligible to receive the prizes for institutions should they win.

The contest is divided into three categories: lower secondary (Forms One to Three), upper secondary (Forms Four to Six) and tertiary undergraduates only.

Participants have a choice of three essay titles to choose from:

- 1. What is your vision of Malaysia in 2057 when the country celebrates its centennial independence celebrations?
- 2. Describe what leadership means to you and the role that youth leaders play in shaping Malaysia's future.
- 3. Describe the relationship among culture, education and leadership, and the factors that you believe are important in moulding the future leaders of Malaysia.

The essays are to be typed (with double spacing) in either English or Bahasa Malaysia on one side of white A4 paper.



Kadir (left) and Nik Mohamed are keen to read the works of youngsters.

Each page should be numbered.

Lower secondary students should write between 800 and 1,000 words, while upper secondary students should submit 1,300 to 1,500 words, and undergraduates, 1,800 to 2,000 words.

The entries will be judged on the quality of their research and analysis, as well as writing style. Students are encouraged to make use of the resources available at the Perdana Library in Putrajaya.

Other prizes up for grabs are Apple MacBook computers, iPod Nanos and mobile phones.

Upper secondary and tertiary students will also have a shot at a two-week work placement, organised by the foundation, should they emerge as first prize winners in their respective categories.

In addition, desktop workstations of a computer, printer and scanner, will be awarded to the school of the grand prize winner. These prizes will also be given to institutions with the most number of entries.

"Use simple language, short sentences and be precise in what you want to say. You can have style, without being long-winded," says group editor-in-chief of Berita Publishing, Datuk A. Gao Jasin, who is one of the three judges of the contest.

PLF executive director Tan Sri Nik

Mohamed Nik Yaacob says the command of the language of those in last year's contest was a main concern for the judges.

He adds that the judges had commented that the style and the language of the entries in the previous year were loose, pointing out that grammar and sentence construction will be taken into account as well.

According to a statement, some lower secondary students could write and converse just as well as those in upper secondary schools and at tertiary levels.

Last year's winning essays will be published in May, while selected winning essays will be available online for participants' reference, says PLF general manager Zainal Abu Bakar.

"The judges will be using a web-based tool to detect plagiarism during the preliminary stages.

"It is a tool used by some universities to check students' work against resources found on the internet," she said.

In addition, shortlisted candidates will also be called for an interview. Other judges are Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr K. S. Jayaram of Universiti Malaya, and former *Business Times* editor Hardev Kaur.

For enquiries, call 03-88852200 or visit www.perdana.org.my