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# Islamic calligraphy expert bags Maulidur Rasul award

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**Honoured:** Najib presenting the award to Mohammed Yusof at the Putra Mosque in Putrajaya as (from left) Dr Ahmad Zahid, Jamil and Jakim director-general Tan Sri Othman Mustapa look on.

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**PUTRAJAYA:** A lifelong love of Islamic calligraphy has led expert Mohammed Yusof Abu Bakar to be chosen as the recipient of the premier award (*Anugerah Perdana*) for this year's national Maulidur Rasul awards.

Mohammed Yusof, 86, who served as an education officer with the Islamic Studies Department of the Education Ministry, was recognised for his work as one of the pioneers in the Islamic calligraphy (*khat*) in Malaysia.

Mohammed Yusof said apart from being one of the first to popularise the craft in the country, he also witnessed the gradual growth of Islamic calligraphy in Malaysia.

"I first became interested in Islamic calligraphy in 1947. At that time, it wasn't popular here but now we have produced some experts and there is a huge following," he told reporters after receiving the award from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the Putra Mosque here yesterday.

Eight others who received their awards include author, lecturer and activist Dr Lim Swee Tin.

Lim, who writes mostly in Bahasa Malaysia, hoped that the award would underscore the importance of language and prose in the promotion of unity and peace, not just in the country but globally.

"I feel that as a Malaysian, I have the responsibility to promote Malay as a language of unity," said the 64-year-old.

The awards were presented during the annual national-level Maulidur Rasul celebration.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Jamil Khir Baharom, in his speech, urged Muslims to not be swayed by extremist views.

Among others present at the ceremony were the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapha Mohamad.