

Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	7/9/2017

'CULTURAL ECONOMY'

# 'IT IS A NEW ASSET FOR MALAYSIA'

NST  
- 7/9/2017  
pg. 6

Arts, culture are source of pride for nation, says PM

AZURA ABAS  
PUTRAJAYA  
news@nst.com.my

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has declared "cultural economy" as a new asset for Malaysia.

Najib said the core of a civilisation lay in its arts and culture that would become its soul.

"Without that soul, what will you get? You will get skyscrapers and physical infrastructure. But, you don't have the soul and we want the soul for Malaysia.

"We want Malaysia to be perceived as rich in its heritage. Heritage alone is not enough. You need to contemporarise it; make it accessible and popular.

"You have to develop skills and the talent. You have to communicate it and you will see that we, as a nation, will have a new source of inspiration that would enrich our identity that is respected and appreciated because we have cultural values as a source of pride

for Malaysians.

"I can see the culture and arts industry as a component with the potential to be developed to an optimum level."

Najib was speaking at the launch of the Cultural Economy Development Agency (Cendana) yesterday. An initial allocation of RM20 million has been made for the agency.

Present were Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak and Cendana founding chief executive officer Izan Satrina Mohd Sallehuddin.

Najib said the industry had the means to provide jobs for thousands and could have a positive impact on the economy.

It would need a body such as Cendana, led by its own players and not politicians as well as bureaucrats, to promote and lead the development of a vibrant cultural economy.

Cendana is governed by the Executive Advisory Committee (EAC) to oversee the development and implementation of corporate strategy and ensure the delivery of the agency's objectives.

Chaired by communications adviser to the prime minister



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the launch of the Cultural Economy Development Agency (Cendana) in Putrajaya yesterday. With him are Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak (second from left), communications adviser to the prime minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Farid Ridzuan (fifth from left), Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa (second from right) and Cendana founding chief executive officer Izan Satrina Mohd Sallehuddin (third from right).  
PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

Datuk Seri Ahmad Farid Ridzuan, EAC members include prominent public and private stakeholders such as MyCreative Ventures chief executive officer Johan Ishak, Hasanah Foundation managing director Shahira Ahmed Bazari, Bursa Malaysia chief operating officer Datin Azalina Adham and Astro Malay Language Business vice-president Datuk Khairul Anwar Salleh.

To ensure inclusiveness and relevance, Cendana's Industry Advisory Panel has included the nation's most experienced practitioners in the cultural sector, who are tasked with providing independent advice and recommendations on the implementation of Cendana's strategic and tactical activities.

The panel members include Hands Percussion founder and artistic director Bernard Goh, who will give input on performing arts; Yayasan Budi Penyayang chairman and Kitakita founding

partner Nori Abdullah (crafts); Livescape Group and Artist; One Buck Short director Rahul Kukreja (music); artist and curator Nurhanim Khairuddin (visual arts); Seni Pusaka managing director Pauline Fan (culture), and Badan Warisan Malaysia vice-president Elizabeth Cardoso (heritage).

An International Advisory Panel has been formed to further strengthen international networks for the benefit of Malaysia's arts and culture export and to ensure Cendana considers potential new collaborations with international cultural communities.

On policies, Najib said the government was ready to look into suggestions to strengthen and improve existing procedures, which he noted had to be done through concerted efforts.

"Culture and arts is the last component of our transformation journey for Malaysia. If we

can develop this sector successfully, we have accomplished what we set Malaysia out to be, which is a developed nation."

He expressed hope at seeing the industry become an impactful sector with high returns for the people and country.

Under Cendana, he said, efforts would be put in place to bring about an upheaval of the "cultural economy" across all fronts, with the Klang Valley as a staging ground.

There are plans to energise the landscape via stimulating demand for the arts, empowering the communities by not only improving circumstances for individual artists and arts groups, but also on a larger scale by refining existing policies and making investing in the arts more attractive to corporations.

Research will be continuously conducted to have an evidence-based approach and to improve the arts and culture ecosystem.