

Newspaper	THE STAR
Date	28 JULY 2017

Japanese student wows judges with BM speech

thestar - 28/7/2017 Pg. 2

By JOSEPH KAOS Jr
joekaosjr@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Her love and admiration for Malaysian culture inspired Japanese student Lisa Shimazaki to learn the Malay language three years ago.

The Sapporo native strove to master the language and eventually found the confidence to enter a *pidato* (public speaking) competition here.

The 21-year-old wowed the judges and audience with her speech titled *Bahasa Bukan Sekadar Alat Komunikasi, Bahasa Adalah Segalanya* (Language is not just a communication tool, language is everything).

Her hard work and courage paid off as she won the Prime Minister's Trophy in the international category of the 2017 Bahasa Melayu International Public Speaking (PABM) competition.

When interviewed by reporters, Shimazaki spoke confidently in Bahasa Malaysia, saying she loved the language because she felt it was *indah* (beautiful).

"I chose to learn Bahasa Malaysia because I really like South-East Asian countries and their culture. Everything about Malaysia to me is inspiring.

"The language is not so difficult to master, although sometimes I do forget some words," she said.

Besides her native Japanese language and Bahasa Malaysia, the student of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies also speaks English and a bit of Spanish.

She has even adopted a Malay name for herself - Raihana.

"My lecturer Puan Faridah gave me that name. I love it," she said.

Shimazaki fended off challeng-



Vibrant victory: Najib and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor with Abdul Matin (Najib's right), Noor Haqim (third from right) and Shimazaki (second from right) during the prize-giving ceremony at Putrajaya International Convention Centre. Looking on are Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh (second from left) and his deputy Datuk Dr Mary Yap Kain Ching (right). — Bernama

ers, including Ma Xiao from China and Rimajon Sotlikova from Uzbekistan, in the final round of the competition.

In the Foreign Students' in Malaysia category, International Islamic University IT student Abdul Matin Mohamed Azeem was crowned champion.

The third time was the charm for the Afghanistan native, who finally snagged the trophy after failing to do so in 2013 and last year.

"I suppose you could say my

experience from previous years helped me win the competition this time around, although I still think it was hard due to the number of good competitors," he said.

Abdul Matin, 24, moved to Malaysia with his parents and enrolled in a local school at the age of 13.

"Bahasa Malaysia has become my daily language because I use it to speak with my friends, so I am very comfortable with it," he said.

The *Alam Melayu* (Malay world) category, which saw participants

from Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore and Thailand, was won by Malaysian Noor Haqim Noor Hamiddon.

The three champions took home a RM20,000 cash prize, a trophy, a certificate and a copy of the *Kamus Dewan* dictionary.

The prizes were presented by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak during the finals on Wednesday night.

Some 52 contestants from 35 countries took part in the competition.