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# PM: Arts and culture vital too

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Progress must include both, says Najib

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PUTRAJAYA: Arts and culture are part of Malaysia's transformation journey and will not be left out from development, the Prime Minister said.

Declaring arts and culture as the new asset to the country, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said cultural development must be in tandem with other kinds of progress so that Malaysia would not just be about "tall buildings and infrastructure but a country that has soul".

"Arts and culture are important components in a civilisation. Without it, there is no soul. My aspiration is for Malaysia to be a nation that is not only well developed but also rich in heritage.

"These are components of our transformation journey. Once we develop these sectors, then we have reached our goal of becoming a developed nation," he said at the launch of the Cultural Economy Development Agency, or Cendana.

The Prime Minister said that with



**Big boost:** Najib launching the Cultural Economy Development Agency in Putrajaya.

public infrastructure such as the mass rapid transit system in place, and development of new centres of growth including Bandar Malaysia, Tun Razak Exchange and the former Pudu Prison site taking shape, it was time to focus on development of arts and culture.

Cendana's role is to lead the development of a vibrant cultural economy, focusing on championing the development of the arts and culture sector within the creative industry and to promote it to a wider audience.

Najib said the creative economy is one of the most rapidly growing sectors in the world's economy, creating job opportunities, income and

export earnings.

"Industry players should take the cue and come up with efforts and ingenious ways to promote, sell, market and communicate them.

"We want the world to know and appreciate the Malaysian brand, just like how people can identify K-pop with South Korea and Bollywood with India.

"I believe we are not short of talent. On the contrary, we have many young and talented people who can promote the country via arts and culture," he said.

Cendana chief executive officer Izan Satrina Mohd Sallehuddin said its setting up demonstrates exciting times ahead for the arts, adding that

while arts and culture are recognised as important assets, they have not been nurtured to their full potential.

"The Government is taking unprecedented steps to elevate the voices of the arts and culture communities.

"The setting up of Cendana demonstrates the Prime Minister's commitment to increasing the opportunities for arts and culture communities and ensures more people in more places have access to our arts and culture," she said.

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