



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad receiving a scroll from National Academy of Arts Culture and Heritage rector Associate Professor Sahar Sa'di Hashim at Aswara's convocation in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With them is Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali (second from right). PIC BY EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN

'WORK TOGETHER'

# PM: TAKE OUR CULTURE TO GLOBAL STAGE

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'This will allow people to learn about our diversity'

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**A**RTS and culture reflect a country's civilisation and play an important role in the development of society.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said developed countries around the world recognised the importance of these elements in their development agenda.

According to him, achievement, quality and facilities to conduct activities related to arts and culture were often used as international benchmarks in determining the level of development of a country.

Dr Mahathir urged all quarters to work together in promoting arts and culture.

"Malaysia is a country that is rich in culture, customs and traditions since we are made of people of diverse backgrounds.

"Over the years, it is the diversity of our people that has contributed to the development of our country.

"Malaysia's rich culture is not enough to grow in the country alone. We need to take our culture to the international level. This will enable people around the world to learn about our rich culture," he said at the National Academy of Arts Culture and Heritage's (Aswara) convocation here yesterday.

Present were Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Mohamadn Ketapi, Aswara board of directors chairman Datuk Rashidi Hasbullah and the academy's rector, Associate Professor Sahar Sa'di Hashim. Also present was Dr Mahathir's wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

The prime minister said the

creative content industry, such as film, drama and animation production, could be an export item, which could benefit the country if the products were of high quality.

"(Having said that), the industry is a thriving sector in Malaysia. Up to March 31, 345 companies have been awarded the Multimedia Super Corridor Malaysia status under the Creative Content and Technology cluster.

"Last year, companies under this cluster recorded sales of RM7.69 billion with export value of RM1.40 billion. The companies also provided 11,471 job opportunities."

Later, Dr Mahathir said he described arts as part of the value system in society.

"It is not only a form of entertainment, but also a medium of telling stories in promoting and nurturing noble ethics.

"Through arts, we can promote a good value system. The country will eventually succeed if we have such a system."