

PM: Engage young talent to spur creative industries
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PETALING JAYA: It is essential for Malaysia to develop its creative industries to build more global brands, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

He said this was necessary despite success stories like Petronas, AirAsia, Maxis, Celcom, DiGi and others.

"Roy Disney once remarked that creativity is a funny thing -- difficult to quantify, but obvious when it's missing.

"With the creative industries contributing only 1.6 per cent of our country's GDP (gross domestic product), I think it's time to admit that Disney's 'X' factor is missing here," he said at the Putra Brand Awards ceremony last night.

Najib's speech was read out by his deputy, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said things needed to change fast, with the engagement of the hottest young talents, to slow the brain drain in the country and that the effort of everyone was needed to achieve this.

"The government is investing in new high-growth industries as part of the Economic Transformation Programme and working to forge a bold new path.

"We also need everyone in the industry to aspire to excel, to seize the opportunities the country presents and to make the most of the rich resources available."

He added that the mention of Malaysia should evoke strong and positive associations in people's minds, such as French cinema, Italian fashion or Japanese electronics.

"By defining our identity clearly, proudly, unashamedly, everyone stands to gain. Regardless of whether the product is simple or complicated, the best known names are built on the same foundation -- a strong brand essence, robust brand positioning and powerful brand insight that speaks to the hearts, minds and wallets of consumers."

Najib said the advent of social media had also brought new opportunities, new audiences and new demands.

"I'm proud to have more than half a million followers on Twitter -- not that I'm counting, though if I were, I might be forced to admit that I'm still a little short of Lady Gaga."

At the awards, Astro won the Putra Brand of The Year award, while Old Town White Coffee and Sen Q took home awards for the most promising brand of the year and SME of the year respectively.

Media Prima's TV3 won the Bronze award for the communications and entertainment category.

The award ceremony was organised for the third time by the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Malaysia (4As), Branding Association of Malaysia, Media Specialists Association and Matrade.

Present were 4As president Tony Savarimuthu and Datuk Johnny Mun, chairman of the organising committee of this year's awards.

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