

**1Malaysia Novel Writing Competition Open To Writers From Throughout The World
- Najib
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PUTRAJAYA, March 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak tonight announced that the government is organising a 1Malaysia Novel Writing Competition which will be open to writers from throughout the world to further strengthen Bahasa Melayu as an international language.

He said participation was open to all levels of the global society irrespective of age as long as the manuscripts were in Bahasa Melayu.

"I hope this competition will produce many more quality literary works in Bahasa Melayu that are centred on harmonious living, administration, economy, governing systems and education," he said when opening the 2012 Prime Minister's Cup International Oratory Competition, here Thursday.

Also present were the prime minister's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

Najib said the novel writing competition would be handled by the Malaysian Books and Translation Institute.

Najib said the competition could be the basis of making Bahasa Melayu a supranational language that would thrive not only in Malaysia but throughout the world.

"I laud the efforts taken by various quarters to internationalise Bahasa Melayu and Malay literature by setting up study centres throughout the world for the purpose of teaching Bahasa Melayu," he said.

He noted that Malay studies was already being taught in scores of universities throughout the world, particularly in Europe, Africa and North America.

Najib also said Bahasa Melayu which was a rich and beautiful language also had the potential to be a language of knowledge, skills and science.

According to him, Bahasa Melayu's excellence had been recognised since as early as the 15th century when the Ming Dynasty in China set up a foreign languages department which also covered Bahasa Melayu, resulting in the production of a Chinese-Malay dictionary.

He also said Bahasa Melayu had long been accepted as a language of diplomacy in the region.

"The proof, Unesco has recognised Bahasa Melayu letters written in Jawi by the Sultan of Kedah in the 19th century to the British government then as world heritage," he said.

Sixty-nine participants from 64 countries took part in the oratory competition.

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