

PM assures writers of freedom to pen ideas

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PUTRAJAYA: The government has assured local writers that they will be given ample freedom in pursuing their work.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said writers too have a role to play in Malaysia achieving a high-income and developed nation status.

"It should be measured based on the level of the community's creativity and innovativeness in producing quality writings.

"We will give ample freedom to writers to pen their ideas and at the same time assist young generation writers to polish the skill," he said when launching 30 original titles published by the Malaysian Translation and Books Institute at Seri Perdana on Tuesday.

Najib urged local writers to expand their imagination by venturing into the outside world to acquire knowledge which could be shared with others in the country.

He said they should also learn from eminent figures of modernisation, like Jamaluddin al-Afghani, on his travels to many countries.

"Through his travels, al-Afghani demonstrates to the people the way to deal with modernisation through thinking rationally and independently," he added.

He said, while other countries, including Muslim countries, faced political conflicts, Malaysians were still blessed with peace and freedom to think and carry out their intellectual and educational activities.

"We should learn how Baghdad, Cordoba, Qairuwan, Bashrah and Kufah, during the glory days of Islam, were like an ocean of knowledge, but due to the carelessness of their people, the knowledge disappeared, and the Islamic city shifted elsewhere," he added.

Najib said, such an incident should not be allowed to happen in the country, but if everyone were to fold their arms and allow the slander to win against the truth, it would not be surprising to see the people cry over something that they had lost.

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