

**Innovation, Creativity Vital To Achieve Vision 2020 – Najib
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PUTRAJAYA, Dec 16 (Bernama) -- Innovation and creativity will become the two most important aspects in the country's development to achieve Vision 2020 (Wawasan 2020), said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, today.

The Prime Minister urged all the stake holders to focus on innovation and creativity during every brain storming session.

"Such brain storming sessions are important and must be initiated now instead of waiting for the implementation of Vision 2020.

"The government will therefore take steps to strengthen the ability to think and act based on innovative and creative ideas," he said at The Prime Minister's Innovation Awards held at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC), here today.

Najib said according to the Global Innovation Index (GII), Malaysia are currently in 32nd position among 141 countries with a score of 45.98, based on 79 key indicators analysed and nine of such initiatives are in the top 10.

The Prime Minister said the government had taken the necessary steps by allocating RM100 million to Agensi Inovasi Malaysia, RM200 million to Malaysia Debt Ventures Sdn Bhd and RM35 million to the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creative (MaGIC) under the 2016 Budget.

The government has also shown its commitment by encouraging innovative activities through study grants, research and development as well as for basic research and experiment.

"To achieve the desired objective and effective action, government agencies must avoid carrying out repetitive duties," he said.

Najib said the government must always plant the seeds of innovation and creativity in every aspect to remain a competitive civil service provider when moving forward.

Meanwhile, Najib presented the Prime Minister's Innovation Award to the Armed Forces of Malaysia for their people centered programme which focused on helping rural people in Terengganu, Sarawak, Pahang and Perak.

The award which came with a cash prize of RM1 million and a trophy was received by General Tan Sri Zulkifeli Mohd Zin.

"Through the programme, the armed forces has built 269.6km of roads and 45 bridges at a cost of RM319.03 million to benefit 92,100 people from 108 villages.

"The most challenging task undertaken by us is to build the road from Long Lopeng to Ba'kelalan in Sarawak due to its high altitude and uncertain weather. However, work was completed in two years instead of five years and the travel time was reduced from eight hours to four hours.

"This award will inspire us further to work harder to uplift the wellbeing of the rural folks in projects or programmes carried out by the armed forces," said Zulkifeli.

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