

# Leaders of substance inspire all Malaysians

**MERDEKA AWARD RECIPIENTS:** Young and old will feel humbled by their exemplary sacrifices and dedication

**A**WAY from the hullabaloo of negative messages of hate, anger, and unbridled emotionalism that daily snatch media attention, leaders of three institutions came together to honour five other leaders who are inspiring role models.

Raja Dr Nazrin Shah and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, leaders from Petronas, Shell and

Exxon Mobil are from the institutions of royalty, government and business synergising their mission of "promoting thought leadership and innovation, foster a culture of excellence, encourage a world view, thereby enhancing Malaysia's standing as a dynamic, competitive 21st Century Global Player in all key sectors from science and technology to the arts" through the Merdeka Awards ini-

tiative which began in 2007.

Such national and international awards are significant initiatives in a world of contradictions and conflicts evidenced by the significance of the Nobel laureate awards, the Ramon Magsaysay Awards of the Philippines, the Nikkei Asia Award of Japan, the Prince Mahidol Award of Thailand, the World Innovation Summit for Education, Qatar and similar awards that celebrate integrity, service to the people and to humanity and uncompromising excellence.

Malaysian recipients of the Merdeka Awards are as significant and substantive as any other of the crème de la crème in their respective fields of leadership.

To create the mood before the award the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra of young talented

Malaysians provided the mental mood. Four young vocalists sang patriotic songs and the orchestra made music marking the significance of the sacred spirit of independence.

The Board of Trustees named five individuals for lasting contributions in the respective fields. Like the 22 others before them, the 2013 recipients have inspirational stories which would make young and old feel humbled by their exemplary sacrifices and dedication.

Tan Sri Arshad Ayub is recognised for shaping Malaysian education through development of professional education, education reform and innovation and democratisation of education, particularly in building Institut Teknologi Mara which is now Universiti Teknologi Mara.

Raja Tan Sri Muhammad Alias



The five outstanding Malaysians (from left) Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr Lam Sai Kit, Tan Sri Dr Yahya Awang, Raja Tan Sri Muhammad Alias Raja Muhammad Ali, Dr Lim Boo Liat and Tan Sri Arshad Ayub with their awards. Pic by Aizuddin Saad



**Datuk Dr Ibrahim Ahmad Bajundia** is deputy vice-chancellor of INTI Laureate International University

Raja Muhammad Ali was the shaper of rural development and rural reform through organising successful land settlement projects.

Dr Lim Boo Liat is outstanding as champion for conservation of Malaysia's biological diversity through study and control of vector borne diseases, and advocating protection of natural heritage.

Tan Sri Yahya Awang is recognised for pioneering development of clinical research and cardiac surgery, the establishment of National Heart Institute, advocating of expansion of facilities and expertise in cardiac surgery and research.

Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr Lam Sai Kit is exemplary for scholarly research in medical virology and emerging infectious diseases including dengue.

They are focused, determined, and committed, spirited and inspirational with a sense of humour.

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## Real role models and soul mates

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These leaders are the products of an excellent education system, excellent upbringing, with self-development motivation in times when opportunities were few and resources rare.

Nevertheless, they built themselves to be equal to the best anywhere in the world in their respective fields. Through their life journeys, they acknowledge gratefulness to their families who made sacrifices, friends, colleagues, government institutions, and leaders who were supportive.

Their collective wit was exemplified by Yahya's comment regarding his wife's understanding and devotion when he was away from her mending hundreds of "broken hearts!"

As society develops, there is the call for the nurturing of the culture of High Order Thinking (HOT). One aspect of HOT is objectivity and discernment. High order thinking is not just the mechanics of the mind but is founded upon the richness of contents as tools for the processes of thinking.

When people are familiarised with the substantive contributions of role models, then they are enabled to exercise high order thinking with objectivity and discernment.

With clarity of what role models have done and what more can be done by the next generation of leaders, people will not be easily influenced by those who are fiery in words and blame but are relatively empty in contributions.

There should be abundant role models and those who inspire so that Malaysians can discern those who are substantive and those who are empty.

In this respect, Datin Azizah Mokhzani has selected and published stories of 500 eminent Malaysians who have created history. Such efforts that contribute to national assets and intelligence are commendable and should receive due support and respect for they contribute to objectivity and discernment.

The nation needs to be inspired by role models who can be soul mates who contribute to reduce the manipulation, not inspiration by, lesser leaders from any domain who engage in negative constructed altercations and hoo-hahs.

✉ [labaiw@yahoo.com](mailto:labaiw@yahoo.com)