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Pahang will start campaign to collect reading materials

KUANTAN, Fri. - Pahang will start a campaign to collect old and new reading materials to be contributed to the National Book Fund on Aug 5.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will launch the fund on the same day.

State Rural Development and Village Growth Centres Committee chairman Datuk Omar Othman said the reading materials would then be distributed to libraries in the State's rural areas.

"Contributors can send books, magazines and other materials to any of the Petronas petrol kiosks or post offices in the State until Sept 30," he said.

Omar said the Community Development Department would sort out the reading materials according to their categories before sending them out to the libraries.

"We accept books of any language," he said.

Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa announced the formation of the National Book Fund on July 19.

He said the effort would enable the Government to set up at least 1,000 rural libraries and reading centres.

At present, there are only 198 rural libraries and reading centres nationwide.

Omar said a ceremony would be held on Aug 12 where collected reading materials would be handed over to Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob.

He said the move by his committee was to complement efforts by other departments and agencies to reduce illiteracy.

"As the committee deals directly with rural people, it is only proper that we contribute," he said, adding that the move should not be construed as an attempt by the committee to take over the role of other agencies.

A report prepared by the National Library in 1996 showed that the average Malaysian read two books per year while the literacy rate was 93 per cent.

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