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Slow response to book donation campaign so far

IPOH, Thurs. - The book donation campaign, organised by the Ministry of Rural Development, has not received satisfactory response.

State Community Development Department director Ghazali Ibrahim said nationwide, only some 350,000 books had been collected compared with the new one-million target.

The original target was 1.5 million books.

"As for Perak, we have so far collected 33,000 books of the targeted 150,000," he told a Press conference today.

Launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Aug 5, the two-month campaign which was to have ended last month, has been extended to Oct 31.

"We urge the people to donate their old books which are still in good condition," Ghazali said.

Books can be dropped off at Petronas stations and at post offices nationwide.

The department has also recently started house calls to encourage more people to donate.

Astro is also providing a collection service at their counters.

"In Ipoh, we also have a mobile collection unit. Those who have no transport to the Astro outlet at Kinta City can dial 05-3223163 and Astro personnel will collect the books from their homes," said Ghazali.

Publishers have also been approached and response has been satisfactory.

"Generally, more books have been donated recently and we hope this remains the case."

The book donation campaign aims to increase literacy awareness to achieve 100 per cent literacy in the country by the year 2000 while encouraging the people to read more.

The current literacy rate is 93 per cent.

To date, there are 652 public libraries and 198 community libraries nationwide.

"The books collected under this campaign will be donated to 1,001 places such as old folk's homes, orphanages and villages.

"Where necessary, we plan to set up reading corners to help cultivate the habit."

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