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PM: Petty traders must improve business before venturing out

ALOR STAR, Mon. - Small-time businessmen must strive to improve and venture into bigger business after gathering experience, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"In any business, we must always improve and become more organised," he said.

Launching a book titled, *Che Det dan Pekan Rabu*, in front of the Alor Star's famed traditional craft and food market, Dr Mahathir expressed his dream of seeing Pekan Rabu and its surrounding area transformed into a mall in the fashion of Bintang Walk in Kuala Lumpur.

"I hope traders in Pekan Rabu will not think that they should stay here forever.

"Once they improve and develop, they can go on to bigger things and give new traders their place in Pekan Rabu," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who set up shop at Pekan Rabu during the Japanese Occupation, said he had never distanced himself from his beginnings as a trader there.

"This is where I first learnt about business and economics; knowledge that has been useful until now when I am the Prime Minister.

"I have even written a guidebook for petty traders based on the knowledge gathered here (Pekan Rabu).

"My experience has also helped me learn how to budget, take account of costs and expenses and learn to save and re-invest in business."

Dr Mahathir, who spoke fondly of his days at Pekan Rabu, said the book was the greatest honour he had ever received.

He said he disliked his name to be associated with other things, but not Pekan Rabu.

The pictorial book, published by Koperasi Pekan Rabu Alor Star Berhad, was written by Kedah State Library circulation division head, Zahidi Zainol Rashid, in recognition of the Prime Minister's contributions to the development of Pekan Rabu.

This is Zahidi Zainol's second book on the Prime Minister, the first being *Mahathir di Mata Umum*, published by Koperasi Serbaguna Penulis Utara Malaysia Bhd last year.

At RM120 a copy, the book features the history and development of Pekan Rabu from a day market along Tanjung Chali in Alor Star to the bustling marketplace and landmark that it is today.

Relating his experience, Dr Mahathir said he and three friends began trading in Pekan Rabu after he was thrown out from doing business at a canteen in the State Government office, by the Japanese.

They opened a stall selling coffee, cendol, ginger juice, pulut udang and other foodstuff before venturing into selling "bigger things".

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