

11 AUG 2002

Cuepacs-Allowance

CUEPACS SUGGESTS "BOOK ALLOWANCE" FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

KUCHING, Aug 11 (Bernama) -- The government should introduce a special "book allowance" in efforts to encourage civil servants to read English books or novels to improve their proficiency in the language, Cuepacs suggested today.

Its Sarawak Chairman William Gani Bina said with the high price of English paperback novels costing between RM50 and RM100, it was unlikely government employees would fork out their own money to buy an English novel a month.

"As long as it does not cause a huge financial burden, the government should consider introducing book allowance for civil servants soon," he told Bernama.

Under the proposed book allowance, the government would reimburse the money used by government employees to buy an English book or novel after it was endorsed by the department heads, he said.

Heads of department should endorse the purchase only after checking the transaction receipts and the book to avoid abuse, he said.

With the current emphasis on English, Gani said the proposal would not only benefit the government but would also speed up the process of mastering English among students.

"Students whose father or mother is a government employee can improve their English by reading the books or novels bought by their parents," he said.

Besides introducing the allowance, Gani urged the government to look for solutions to reduce prices of English books and provide incentives to English translators to translate academic books from Bahasa Melayu.

"We hope when Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tables the 2003 Budget on Sept 20, he will announce some solutions to these problems," he said.

Tax exemptions were not enough to inculcate reading habits among the people, he said.

Yesterday, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman suggested that civil servants read an English novel a month in view of the worrying standard of the language among them.

In line with the government's emphasis to master English, reading at least one book or novel in English by eminent writers would help master the language, he said.

-- BERNAMA

RDY TS