

Zahid throws a challenge - win us a Nobel Prize in Literature

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Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has thrown a challenge to Malaysian authors and novelist: win for Malaysia its first Nobel Prize in Literature.

He set the year 2057 for this goal, when the country celebrates her 100th independence anniversary.

He also hopes homegrown novels can be made into films for international debut.

"I want to challenge myself and fiction writers to take a bigger step – to put ourself at the international level with the cooperation of the film producers.

"We want our writers, be it those who write fictions or those who produce books based on research, to make it into the international stage. In 2057, we want (to see a) Nobel Prize winner in Literature from among Malaysians," he said at the National Book Awards ceremony in Kuala Lumpur today.

(The Nobel Prize in Literature is awarded annually by the Swedish Academy to authors for outstanding contributions in the field of literature.)

The home minister also vowed never to sideline the development of literature.

In his speech earlier, Zahid said the country was lagging in terms of producing well-known literary works.

Citing the blockbuster Harry Potter movie series and popular Korean drama 'Winter Sonata' as examples, he also questioned why Malaysia lacked a name for herself in those fields.

He said one reason could be that Malaysian authors felt that they were too insignificant and thus avoided translating their works into English and producing a film out of it.

Zahid assured Malaysian writers that the government would always support them but that they would need to play their role first by breaking out of their cocoon mentality.

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