

National Book Policy to be revised to promote reading

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The Education Ministry plans to revise the National Book Policy to make it an important component in promoting the "reading culture" and strengthening the national language.

The National Book Policy, under the administration of the National Book Council, will be revised by a committee jointly chaired by Education Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein and Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Rais Yatim.

Hishammuddin said the steering committee today discussed issues and challenges that would be faced in achieving the goals of the policy within the context of strengthening the national language.

He said the committee had been given three weeks to formulate ideas to ensure the goals of the National Book Policy would be achieved.

"If it does not work this time, I do not know what else we can do to achieve the goals of the policy," he said.

If all goes well, he said, he and Rais would lobby for laws that would empower bodies such as Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, the National Book Council, the National Library and the National Translation Institute to carry out their responsibilities in achieving the goals of the policy.

"I am not looking at major changes until 2010. With this effort, which has never been done before, five years is a good time for the parties involved to get their act together."

He said the National Book Policy would act as a catalyst for other policies such as the National Education Policy and the National Language Policy.

Among the meeting's suggestions were to introduce training courses within the publishing industry to produce creative and professional talents, and to encourage the growth of the Malay language book industry.

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