

Malaysia can be on par with advanced countries in literary field, says Zahid
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Malaysia can be on par with advanced countries in the literary field if more academic books were published and more local writers were acknowledged and recognised globally, says Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said it was important for Malaysia to remain relevant in the industry as the country was still lagging behind in book publishing compared with other countries.

"According to the Unesco standard, book publishing must be at the rate of 1% or 1,000 books published for every one million population. But in Malaysia only about 15,000 books were published for 27 million of its population.

"So, we are lagging behind in book publishing. The current affordability rate for purchasing books is not at the proper level. We should ask our academicians whether the books published are of high quality, cater to the tastes of readers, and translatable for the international market.

"Don't just be 'jaguh kampung' (village champion)... don't be rigid... by staying in an old cocoon. Each published book must have its value," he said at the National Book Award presentation ceremony in Kuala Lumpur today.

Zahid, who is also home minister, said the marketability of certain publications or books required content that inculcate intellectual value, supports from the public and financial injection from the government.

He said these three aspects were vital to create connectivity between the writer, publisher and the government, besides coping with the demands of the market.

He said the book-industry players should consider e-books to remain relevant in the market and to promote their existing products, such as journals and academic books.

In his speech, Zahid also urged academicians to write more books based on empirically valid research to ensure that it could penetrate the markets and accepted by readers, locally and abroad. – Bernama, November 26, 2015.

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