

# The cheapest way to knowledge for life

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KOTA KINABALU: Reading is a long-term investment which is not only cheap but guarantees knowledge for a lifetime, said Datuk Kamaruzaman Ampun.

The Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), said as a higher learning institution, they encourage students, staff and the public at large to read because the window to the mind is through reading.

"Reading is cheap and guarantees good results because we gain knowledge from it, in fact literacy among Malaysians is 90 per cent, unfortunately very few adopt this culture.

"Based on the National Library research in 2010, the average Malaysian reads between eight and 12 books a year, which is a very small number compared to other countries such as Japan, South Korea and European countries."

He said this after launching the three-day 'Book Fest' at the UMS library here, Wednesday, featuring 13 publications by UMS academicians and other academic reading materials.

"We can gain knowledge by listening but it would be much better if we read, in fact reading doesn't mean you have to read only books, because in this day and age, we have e-books, e-journals etc from the Internet.

"Outstanding people are those who read, in fact reading is cheap and sometimes free, all you need is to have reading

materials," he said, adding that purchasing books, journals and magazines also entitles people to tax relief of RM1,000.

With this in mind, UMS has allocated RM9 million a year for the purpose of buying reading materials for its library.

Kamaruzaman noted that it is quite a substantial amount of money being invested into buying books, text books and all sorts of reading materials including journals and e-books online for its library.

"However, we are going to invest a lot more into this because we want to encourage reading as well as to strengthen our publications," he said, adding that they have a budget of RM800, 000 per year for publication purposes.

Meanwhile, UMS Publishing Unit chief Dr Syed Azizi Wafa Khalid said UMS has produced more than 200 volumes since its publication unit was formed in 2004.

He also announced that UMS recently won the National Book Award under the Best Luxury Book Category for the book entitled 'Perarakan Berjubah', adding that it's among UMS' latest achievements acknowledged at national level.

He noted that UMS has also produced an international best seller journal entitled 'Asian Myrmecology' from the Tropical Biology Institute, which received a very high rating from the Institute For Sustainable Infrastructure (ISI).



Kamaruzaman (right) launching the Book Fest at UMS as Syed Wafa (left) looks on.