

Jamdin wins top Sabah literary award

Published on: Monday, September 14, 2026



Musa handing over a mock cheque for RM30,000 to Jamdin.

KOTA KINABALU: The State Government will continue providing support and funding to strengthen language and literature development in Sabah, said Local Government and Housing Minister Datuk Dr Mohd Arifin Mohd Arif.

He said the State Government would continue working with Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) to promote the Malay language and literature, as well as Sabah’s writers and literary figures.

“The State Government has always provided encouragement, support and funding for language and literature development in Sabah.

“Every year, we allocate funds to assist associations in organising their programmes,” he said when met by reporters after attending the Kinabalu Pen Awards Night (Mapena) recently.

Arifin said one of the State Government’s initiatives was Sabah Language and Literature Contributions (Selasih), which provided allocations for language and literature programmes organised by the State.

He said the State Government also provided funding for literary activities, including the Nusantara Islamic Literature and Arts Festival (Mahrajan Persuratan dan Kesenian Islam Nusantara), which had been held in Membakut for more than 15 years.

“The programme has now been taken over by the Government as an official event and serves as a platform to strengthen ties through literature and language among literary and language practitioners from Asean countries,” he said.

Arifin said he appreciated the Government’s allocation for the programme and also congratulated DBP for its efforts to promote and strengthen literature in Sabah.

The event also saw the presentation of the Sabah Literary Award 2024/2025 and the conferment of the fifth Sabah State Literature Award on Datuk Jamdin Buyong by Sabah Head of State Tun Musa Aman.

A total of 24 recipients of the Hadiah Sastera Sabah 2024/2025 were recognised during Mapena 2026 for their contributions across various literary genres, including novels, short stories, poetry, drama, essays, criticism and children’s illustrated books.

The highlight of the evening was the conferment of the title Sasterawan Negeri Sabah Kelima on Datuk Jamdin Buyong, recognising his longstanding contribution to the development of literature and letters in Sabah.

As the recipient of the Sabah State Literary Award, he received RM30,000 in prize money, a certificate of honour and publication facilities for his works in recognition of his contribution to the literary field.

He was the former State Museum Director and played a key role in preventing the demolition of the historic Kota Kinabalu Community Centre.

Among those recognised on the historic night was local writer Ramlee Jalimin Jainin (RJJ), better known by his pen name Tinta Dewata, from the interior of Sabah.

Born in Kampung Bayangan, Keningau, in 1959, Ramlee is a retired teacher and holds a degree in Education Administration and Law Management from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), as well as a Master of Science in Management from Unitar.

His recognition marked another significant milestone in his long literary journey and highlighted the contribution of writers from Sabah’s interior in bringing local perspectives, voices and realities into the wider literary sphere.

Also present were Sabah Legislative Assembly Deputy Speaker Datuk Al Hambra Tun Juhar, Sabah Federal Secretary Datuk Mohd Razali Wahab, DBP Malaysia Deputy Director-General (Policy) Mohd Salahuddin Mohamed and DBP Sabah branch director Jennitah Noordin.