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DIGITAL AGE

Keeping libraries relevant with u-Pustaka

KUALA LUMPUR: Libraries are relevant in Malaysia and they continue to develop rapidly amid the challenges posed by digital information and social media, said National Library of Malaysia (PNM) director-general Datuk Nafisah Ahmad.

She said there were 13,719 libraries nationwide, including national libraries, 10,180 school resource centres, 1,111 rural libraries, 950 special libraries, 452 academic libraries, 336 state public libraries, 286 Kemas resource centres, 243 Medan Info Desa, 98 international school resource centres, 58 Mara science college resource centres and four community libraries.

"Libraries can remain relevant if they transform to meet society's information needs.

"PNM is developing a 'Ubiquitous Library', or u-Pustaka, as a national information hub to create a knowledge-based culture

through digital library services," she said in a speech at the Presidential Talk "Libraries: Motors of Change" at Tun Mohamed Suffian Auditorium, Universiti Malaya, here, recently.

The talk was by International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) president Gloria Perez-Salmeron. The event was held ahead of the 84th IFLA World Library and Information Congress from Aug 24 to 30 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

Nafisah said the u-Pustaka project included developing the Malaysia National Union Catalogue, with new features and a digital content repository system that allowed storage and management of digital content.

"Four u-Pustaka will be expanded in Melaka, Terengganu, Perlis and at the Kedah Public Library, bringing the number of participating libraries to 12,



International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) president Gloria Perez-Salmeron (centre) speaking at Universiti Malaya in Kuala Lumpur recently. With her are National Library of Malaysia director-general Datuk Nafisah Ahmad (left) and 84th IFLA World Library and Information Congress Malaysia National Committee co-chair Datuk Dr Zaiton Osman. BERNAMA PIC

from eight. With the expansion, the sharing of digital content will be enhanced, making it accessible anytime, anywhere, by anyone."

Perez-Salmeron said it was a huge challenge to be in the library field as information services were continuously changing with the advent of new technology.

"We (in the library field) have to be updated on everything. We

need to analyse who we are serving, focus on the way we serve information and provide them, and be the most relevant source," she said after the talk.

Perez-Salmeron, who is on an official visit to Malaysia, said the congress would be the most prestigious international conference for librarians and give Malaysia a chance to showcase services and facilities at its libraries and share best practices on librarianship,

information management and information technology.

Malaysia is the third Asean country to host the congress, after Thailand in 1999 and Singapore in 2013.

The congress, an international professional and trade event for the library and information services sector, is expected to attract 4,000 delegates from more than 100 countries and bring in RM44.4 million. **Bernama**