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## Malls encouraged to promote reading

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**National unity minister Aaron Ago Dagang says people read an average of 24 books last year.**



National unity secretary-general Hasnol Zam Zam (centre) and National Library of Malaysia director-general Salasiah Abdul Wahab (left) at the opening of an event to promote reading at the MyTOWN Shopping Centre in Cheras today.

## **KUALA LUMPUR:**

Shopping malls have been encouraged to provide more reading spaces and increase the number of bookstores to meet demand from readers.

National unity minister Aaron Ago Dagang said the 2022/2023 Malaysian Reading Profile Study found that 57.7% of the people surveyed enjoyed reading in bookstores and 24.5% enjoyed reading in restaurants and cyber cafes.

It was reported earlier that the study would involve 100,000 respondents, aged five and above, from various backgrounds.

Aaron said the study found that people read an average of 24 books last year, compared to 15 in 2014 and just two in 2005.

A total of 69.9% of Malaysians read to enhance their knowledge and this is a positive finding, he said in a speech at the launch of an event to promote reading at the MyTOWN Shopping Centre in Cheras today.

His speech was read by national unity secretary-general Hasnol Zam Zam.

In his speech, Aaron also encouraged publishing companies to produce more reading materials as 72% of the public allocate up to RM500 per year for such purchases.

Aaron said the ministry would review and implement several suggestions in the 2022/2023 Reading Profile Study to ensure every segment of society has access to quality reading materials.

Among these proposals include establishing a national reading index aimed at monitoring the country's overall reading level starting from 2025 to 2030, and reinstating a programme to redeem book vouchers.

Aaron also called on the National Library of Malaysia to leverage the latest technology to strengthen programmes in order to promote reading.

He said a total of 102,813 programmes to promote reading were conducted nationwide from 2023 until August this year. A total of 3,748,409 people participated in these programmes, he said.

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