

# Getting to root of people's woes

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will meet district officers in a series of visits beginning on Dec 19 to get a better understanding of the people's problems and to find ways to overcome them.

Deputy Prime Minister Ghar Baba will accompany him on these visits which will begin at Hulu Selangor.

Speaking to reporters after meeting district officers at the Prime Minister's Department today, Dr Mahathir said he also hoped to meet local leaders and politicians during his visits.

He said: "There are 125 districts. We can take 125 days to visit all of them. But this is not possible. We would, of course, like to cover them all ... it can be 10 years," he said.

"We feel it is necessary to meet all the officers. We find that at a time when the Government is concentrating on development, there are quarters

By NURAINA SAMAD

who give information to some of these officers to deliberately confuse them.

"This is being carried out to the extent that the affected officers believe that the Government's actions are wrong and do not benefit the people," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this state of affairs would adversely affect the performance of the officers.

Therefore, it was necessary to meet them to clarify any problems they might face, he said.

During the three-hour meeting, Dr Mahathir briefed the officers on the changes that were taking place in the country and the world and impressed upon them the need to adjust to these changes.

The officers also raised questions about the role of politicians and district officers in district development.

Dr Mahathir clarified that a deeper understanding needed to be fostered between the two.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said misunderstanding sometimes occurred between the two groups because both were involved in the development of their specific areas.

The problem was, however, not serious enough to disrupt administration of the districts.

Dr Mahathir also said the problem stemmed from different perspectives on development priorities.

He said he did not think it was necessary to restructure the administration and structure of the district offices.

Also present at the meeting were the Implementation and Coordination Unit (ICU) director-general Datuk Zainal Mahmood, Treasury secretary-general Tan Sri Zain Azraai Zainal Abidin and Public Services Department director-general Tan Sri Alwi Jantan.