

Ministry targets ¹⁰ a million books in ^{5 6 8 9 8} campaign

KUALA LUMPUR: The Rural Development Ministry hopes to collect a million books from its newly-launched Book Donation Campaign for distribution to rural areas.

Minister Datuk Annuar Musa said the two-month campaign, which ends on Sept 30, was aimed at redistributing books from urban centres to rural schools, estates, villages, longhouses, old folks homes and drug rehabilitation centres.

"We want to make the campaign a yearly affair," he said yesterday after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched the campaign at the Petronas petrol kiosk in Sri Hartamas.

Annuar said that if the campaign was successful, the ministry would be able to increase the present 198 reading centres in rural areas to 1,000 by the year end.

He also said the ministry had identified 1,001 rural areas which would benefit from the book donation drive.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir donated 12 books on various topics including religion, philosophy, language and general reading.

Among them were *Islam and the Economic Challenge* by M. Umer

Chapra, *The Philosophy of Dynamic Children* by Tom Valliet Sr, *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* by P.D. James and *Masitering Modern English Usage* by Milon Nandy.

In the souvenir programme, Dr Mahathir

said although Malaysia had a high literacy rate of 93%, its reading culture needed improvement.

The public can hand over their books to any Petronas petrol kiosks, post office or local community centre.