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Action plan to help villagers cope with economic problems

SEREMBAN, Mon. - The Rural Development Ministry will implement a special action plan by the end of August to reduce the impact of the present economic problems on villages.

Its Minister Datuk Annuar Musa said villagers were yet to feel any economic strain as their monthly income was still stable despite the depreciation of the ringgit.

He said the plan would also include strategies for villagers to increase their income and also ways to maximise use of their land.

Speaking after visiting Kampong Pelegong in Labu, about 20km from here today, he said a recent survey showed a family of six villagers needed at least RM600 a month for a comfortable life.

"We want to initiate the relevant measures to ensure the lives of these families were unperturbed by the economic situation," he said, adding that allocations for eradication of poverty under the Economic Recovery Plan were not reduced.

Annuar said that other strategies under the plan would be ways to increase the production of food items from these villages.

The Government has allocated RM24 million this year for this purpose.

He said villagers would be affected in terms of buying power as the price of other items had increased.

The Minister also said that though the response towards the Gerakan Desa Wawasan programme launched two years ago had been encouraging, efforts could be made to improve its effectiveness.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would launch the third phase of the Gerakan Wawasan Desa programme in Kampung Chengal in Kadok, Kelantan, on Aug 22 and 600 new villages have been selected this year.

"We hope that by the end of year 2000, at least 3,000 villages would benefit under the programme."

Annuar also said the Government had allocated RM1 million this year to purchase computers for selected villages in the country. Selected people will be trained in their use.

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