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Dr M to launch Book Fund drive on Wednesday

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will launch the Book Fund campaign on Wednesday to encourage Malaysians to donate reading materials for 1,001 "reading corners and centres".

Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa said the two-month campaign, organised with Pos Malaysia and Petronas, would be held in conjunction with the national "Reading Month".

"We are aiming to collect more than one million books which will be distributed to centres and corners already identified by the Ministry."

Speaking after the Ministry's family day gathering at his orchard in Hulu Langat, Annuar said Cabinet Ministers would kick off the campaign by donating books in a ceremony at the Petronas service station in Taman Sri Hartamas.

"This will be followed next week by simultaneous launches at State level with donations by State executive councillors."

Annuar said the campaign would increase the number of reading corners and centres particularly in rural areas, like FELDA schemes and Orang Asli settlements.

He said there were now only 198 libraries and reading centres in the country.

"We want to increase this number without having to use government funds."

He added that it would take a long time to construct new centres due to bureaucratic procedures.

"Through the Book Fund campaign, we will set up reading corners at established locations such as mosques and village coffeeshops."

Annuar said non-governmental organisations could also help in this effort.

"We also need volunteers to sort out the classification of books and to manage the reading centres."

He also urged the private sector to contribute reading materials, adding that the books would also be sent to orphanages, welfare homes and dadah rehabilitation centres.

He said those who wished to donate reading materials could send them to any post office, Petronas service station or the Ministry from Wednesday. The campaign ends on Sept 30.

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