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Ministry starts scheme to help boost reserve

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Information Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat today launched the Setia Negara Fund where staff of the Ministry, its agencies and the public can donate cash or jewellery to increase the national reserve.

Donations will be put into the Setia Negara Trust Fund Account after it has been approved by the Finance Ministry and later the special body to be set up by the Government.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday announced a special body would be set up to collect donations to aid the country's recovery.

The special body, approved by the Cabinet last week, will ensure all collections are utilised effectively.

Mohamed said the Finance Ministry was asked to consider the special body's establishment which would co-operate with Bank Negara.

Meanwhile, public donations to the Setia Negara Fund can be made at the Ministry's information and broadcasting departments nationwide.

A telethon will also be held soon over RTM radio and television channels, allowing the public to make pledges. Booths may be set up at shopping malls too.

Mohamed was speaking after launching the fund and attending the Ministry's Kongsi Raya celebrations at Dataran Setia, Angkasapuri here.

Together with the Ministry's senior officers, the Minister put his own donation into the collection box.

On the setting up of the Setia Negara Trust Fund Account, Mohamed said it was necessary to legalise collections.

When asked whether funds would still be collected after the country had recovered, he said "you never know when it will be a sunny or rainy day".

"It does not matter whether the contributions are small or big, it is more important that people are aware of the economic problem and they donate.

"This donation drive does not mean we have reached a panic stage ... I do not think so ... we are doing well actually," he said, citing the recent improved performances in the local stock and currency markets as proof.

Mohamed also suggested Malaysians who travelled abroad regularly to donate their "small change" in foreign currencies to the fund.

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