Ministry to set up 416 RT sectors

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High risk urban areas to benefit

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun: Some 416 Rukun Tetangga (neighbourhood watch) sectors will be set up soon in areas which recorded a high number of disputes and public disturbances cases.

National Unity and Social Development Ministry deputy secretary-general Datuk Ahmad Salleh Sarif said most of the high risk zones are in urban areas.

However, he declined to name the areas, saying that they have yet to be identified.

The economic status of the residents will be a consideration in determining the necessity to set up a RT sector in the area, he said.

"The function of the new sectors is to strengthen ties among residents in the areas," he told a press conference today.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in his opening speech at the Mega Unity Gathering 2002 last night, said that there is a need for more RT sectors in areas with a high risk of conflict.

He also said RT – as one of the social institutions playing an important role in promoting unity – should expand its services to promote a harmonious and prosperous society.

"RT also serves to monitor and resolve issues at the grassroots level before they become worse."

The gathering was attended by some 100,000 people at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil.

Responding to questions on the matter, Ahmad Salleh said the ministry will consider establishing RT in other highly populated and squatter areas.

Residents associations should cooperate with the ministry in setting up the RT sectors, he said.

There are now 2,000 RT sectors nationwide.

"The success and effectiveness of each sector depends on the leadership and support of its members," he added.

Earlier, Ahmad Salleh launched the Phoenix Welfare Foundation Charity Fun Fest 2002 on behalf of National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.