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20,000 at open-air charity dinner

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IT was almost unbelievable. For it is not every night that you get to see 20,000 people sitting down to an open-air dinner.

This was the amazing sight when 2,020 tables were set up at the Seremban Municipal ground for the charity dinner.

The dinner was organised on a grand scale to raise funds for the newly-built Mawar Haemodialysis Centre in Jalan Rasah.

The occasion was graced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

Also present were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad, his wife Puan Sri Hazizah Tumin, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Ministers, State Assemblymen, heads of Government departments and donors.

Among the prominent donors who turned up were Talam Corporation Bhd chairman and group managing director Datuk Chan Ah Chye who donated RM2 million and Roadbuilders (M) Holdings chairman Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen Ismail who handed over a mock cheque for RM1 million.

The response from the donors was overwhelming.

The organisers were able to collect RM10 million for the centre.

Earlier that day, Dr Mahathir had declared open the dialysis centre housed in a four-storey building close to the Seremban Hospital.

State Executive Councillor Datuk Dr Yeow Chai Thiam, chairman of the centre which is said to be the biggest in Asia, said the idea to put up the building to help the poor came from the Menteri Besar.

"When kidney patients come here for treatment, we will only charge them RM70 for each visit.

"If they go to private clinics, they will have pay between RM120 and RM150 for each session," said Dr Yeow.

The centre is manned by a doctor and four nurses.

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