

04/07/2001

Money pouring in for Dewan Tunku Canselor

Alina Simon

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Just two days after it was launched, the Dewan Tunku Canselor Restoration Fund received overwhelming support, with donations and pledges from organisations and individuals amounting to RM586,000.

The single largest contribution so far came from OdaSaja (M) Sdn Bhd, which supplies computers through the Employees' Provident Fund scheme.

Making a pledge of RM500,000 to be paid in six months, its executive director Mejar (R) Ismail Ahmad said part of the donation for the restoration of the hall at Universiti Malaya would come from the computer sales.

He said the company was inspired by the support given by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Dr Mahathir had on Sunday given RM600.

"I was so moved by our Prime Minister's generosity that I immediately discussed the idea with the board of directors and our vendors," he said after presenting a mock cheque at the New Straits Times office at Balai Berita in Jalan Riong today.

"Hopefully, our gesture will inspire others to contribute."

The second largest contribution came from Umno Youth which donated RM40,025.20 in a small ceremony at the Balai Berita.

Its education bureau chairman, Dr Adham Baba, said besides today's contribution, the movement would embark on a nationwide fund-raising campaign. It kicked off in Malacca today.

"We are coming up with a host of activities like flag sales and charity work," he said.

Puteri Umno donated a cheque for RM10,000.

Its education bureau head, Sharifah Syahirah Syed Sheikh, said the movement wanted to contribute to the project as it believed in promoting education.

Meanwhile, UM also launched its fund for the reconstruction of the hall today and collected RM155,485.30 besides getting pledges from students, ex-students and university staff.

Vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Anuar Zaini Mohd Zain said the university would work closely with the NST on the fund-raising project. He said the cost of the restoration was estimated at RM13 million.

The restored hall will be turned into a cultural centre with a mini theatre and a gallery.

"We were planning to turn the hall into a cultural centre after the convocation but the fire destroyed that plan. We can't use it to hold the convocation as it is too small to accommodate 6,000 graduates."

He said the new hall would be able to seat 5,000 people. The location is still not determined.

He also said the convocation scheduled for next month would be postponed to early October.

The venue is still being looked into with options like Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil and Stadium Melawati in Shah Alam.

Contributions to the UM-initiated fund should be addressed to: Reconstruction of Dewan Tunku Canselor Fund, Corporate Planning Department, Canselori, Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur.

For queries, call UM corporate planning at 03-79673378/3451/3479/3273/3423/3575) or e-mail zanariah@kimia.um.edu.my or J3zana@umcsd.um.edu.my or pro@um.edu.my. The public can also contact the UM Alumni (tel: 79551061, fax: 79547592 or e-mail paum@maxis.net.my).

