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Sultan-Students

SULTAN KELANTAN COMES TO THE AID OF POOR STUDENTS

GUA MUSANG, Feb 20 (Bernama) -- The Sultan of Kelantan today came to the aid of 379 students who are having problems paying their examination fees because their parents are poor.

Each student received RM200 from the Sultan at the special presentation ceremony at the Civic Centre Hall, here.

Of the number, 239 of the students will be sitting for their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and 140, Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) this year.

They are from Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Paloh, Sekolah Menengah Bandar Chiku, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Sungai Asap and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tengku Indera Petra.

Last week, a daily reported that some 600 poor students in the Gua Musang district might not be able to sit for their PMR and SPM examinations this year as they had yet to pay their examination fees.

The students' predicament had also attracted the attention of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who asked agencies involved to take immediate step to resolve the students' problem.

At today's function, Gua Musang District Officer Shkori Mohamad said the plummeting price of palm oil had aggravated the problem, especially among Kelantan Selatan Development Authority (Kesedar) and Felda settlers.

A 1998 survey identified 880 hardcore poor families in the Gua Musang district.

"Now the problem has spread to the palm oil and rubber settlers. There are 2,157 families of Kesedar settlers and 1,890 Felda settlers. They make up 20 per cent of the population in Gua Musang," he said.

The decline price of palm oil had reduced the settlers' income to less than RM150 a month, forcing them to look for other work, he said.

Shkori said the completion of the RM350 million Gua Musang-Lojing road in February next year would provide the catalyst for growth and resolve the problem of poverty in the district.

--BERNAMA

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