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Welfare programme for students

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RAUB, Thurs. - Umno Youth today launched its welfare programme for poor students in institutions of higher learning.

Pernas Holdings Bhd has contributed RM400,000 as well as RM100,000 worth of goods for the programme.

Under the programme's first scheme, recipients will receive a one-off aid of RM400 on admission to the institutions.

As for the second scheme, recipients will receive a monthly allowance of RM300 each until they have completed their tertiary education. On top of that, their families will receive goods worth RM100 every month.

There are 240 students in the first batch, with 220 of them benefiting from the second scheme.

This programme follows the movement's earlier community programmes involving fishermen in Dungun, Terengganu and settlers/rubber tappers in Sik, Kedah.

Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the programme was part of the movement's efforts to help the Malays progress.

He said under Umno, no group would be sidelined.

"Academic excellence is the main goal and struggle of the Umno Youth," he said when launching the programme at Kampung Pasir Bayam in Dong, here.

Among those present were Pernas Group chairman and chief executive officer Tunku Tan Sri Shahrizan Tunku Sulaiman, Raub Umno chief Datuk Shahiruddin Abdul Moin, Umno Youth executive council members, Pahang Umno Youth chief Ismail Mohamed Said and his committee members.

Hishammuddin, who is also Youth and Sports Minister, said the cash assistance would prompt the students to strive for academic excellence.

"At the same time, it will assist the head of their families to focus on bringing up their children well, especially in the field of education.

"It will also motivate the siblings of the recipients to study hard."

Hishammuddin said the launch of the fund had come at a good time.

"While discussions had been centred on matters like quota system and meritocracy, efforts to improve the children's academic performance appears to have taken a backseat.

"That is why we feel that the movement, through its education bureau, has to take the initiative. This we hope to do with the support of private companies," he said.

Hishammuddin said this was also in line with what Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said - that the responsibility to improve the academic performance of the Malays should be shouldered by all quarters and not only the leadership.

"Umno Youth has placed emphasis on core aspects in its struggle and these are training, religion, education and social," he said, adding that every activity that it organised would be linked to these.