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Carnival to raise funds for education

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Numerous fun activities have been lined up for ex-Mara Junior Science College students, their families and the public at the National Telethon for Education 2004 carnival at Dataran Merdeka on Saturday.

There will be games like street soccer, three-on-three netball, three-on-three basketball, fun fair, go-kart challenge and children's playground apart from cultural shows from institutions of higher learning and performances by local artistes like Hattan, Annuar Zain, Camellia and Nora.

"We are expecting between 50,000 and 150,000 people to turn up at the carnival which will begin early in the morning with the sports events and end at midnight," Mara Junior Science Colleges Former Students' Association (Ansara) president Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir told a Press conference today.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would be attending the carnival about 10pm after a tahlil at the National Mosque in conjunction with Ma'al Hijrah. The performance at night will be telecast live by ntv7.

"We have also invited all Cabinet ministers to the carnival," he added.

Mukhriz said the association hoped to raise as much money as possible from the carnival for its Harapan Ihsan Pelajar (HIP) fund.

"Our initial target was to collect RM1 million by March 1 when the donations via the short-message-service (SMS) and the 600 telephone numbers cease. However, due to the encouraging response, we are quite confident of getting at least RM1.2 million in collections," he said.

To date HIP, which was launched on Feb 10, has collected RM950,000 with the bulk of donations coming from Celcom (M) Bhd (RM250,000), Tenaga Nasional Bhd (RM150,000), Telekom Malaysia Bhd (RM125,000) and UEM Group (RM150,000).

Mukhriz gave an assurance that none of the donations received would be used to finance the carnival. "We promise to implement the collection of funds in a transparent manner," he said.

Realising the benefits that the fund-raising could bring to needy children, Mukhriz said there were suggestions that it be made an annual affair.

"We have received some feedback encouraging us to do it annually or biennially, but we have not really thought about this. However, we feel this fund-raising should not be a one off kind of event," he said.

He added that the association was complementing the Government's effort in helping the underprivileged apart from giving back to the community what they had received from the Government when they were students.

Mukhriz said in conjunction with the carnival, Jalan Raja in front of Dataran Merdeka would be closed to traffic. He added that Star and Putra LRT would be extending their services until 12.30am.

The fund will provide eligible pupils monthly allowances, school books or uniforms, or school fees or study loans. The proceeds from the telethon will also support tuition centres set up with Angkatan Pemuda Warisan Malaysia (Pewaris).

For those who wish to make a contribution, send an SMS of `TABUNG HIP' to 36600 at RM10 per SMS. Contributions can also be made by calling 600-86-1077, or by sending money orders to P.O. Box 10761, 50724 Kuala Lumpur

by March 1.

The public can also contribute on-line through Maybank2u.com by forwarding the contribution to account number 514093410644 or on-line transfer to BCB Internet Banking account number 1414-0035683-051. The New Straits Times is the print media partner.