

# Understanding between parties crucial

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THE Umno Youth assembly on Tuesday did not create fears within the non-Muslim community, movement head Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said yesterday.

He said society formed its opinions on issues based on media reports.

"If the Malay community could read what has been reported in the Chinese dailies on the MCA Youth assembly, the Malays would be confused and afraid."

Hishammuddin said each component party in Barisan Nasional was answerable to the community it represented.

But what was important was that there was understanding and co-operation between the parties, he said on the sidelines of the general assembly.

Hishammuddin was asked to respond to comments by MCA Youth chief Datuk Liow Tiong Lai that non-Malays were disappointed by the racial rhetoric by delegates during the Umno Youth assembly.

Liow had also said that the accusations hurled by Umno Youth at other component parties, were "more poisonous than the Opposition".

Hishammuddin said he had spoken

to Liow on the issue and was confident that BN Youth could resolve any misunderstanding.

BN Youth, he said, had never strayed from its objective of fostering unity between the different races.

Later, when winding up, Hishammuddin, who is also Education Minister, said the government had allocated an additional RM200 million annually for the poor students' supplementary food programme.

This was in addition to the current RM190 million annual allocation.

The increase, he said, was to ensure that poor students, in particular Malays, got sufficient nutrition to study.

"Studies have shown that students without proper nutrients lag behind physically and mentally. With the increase in allocation, we hope students perform better academically," he said when replying to points raised by delegates.

He said the government had allocated RM5.32 billion under the Ninth Malaysia Plan for the upgrading of schools in rural areas, especially in Sabah and Sarawak.