

>STAR2

FASCINATING FAUNA

This orange-hued common tree frog is among the many gems that the wilds of Perak harbour.



web: thestar.com.my mobile: thestarmobile.com

The people's paper Star

Thanks a million

Pupils of SJK (C) Confucian celebrating with a RM2.5mil mock cheque they received from The Community Chest during the launch of the project by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at their school in Sungai Besi. — AZHAR MAHFOF / The Star



Charity chest

Multi-million ringgit fund to help vernacular and mission schools

KUALA LUMPUR: The country's top business tycoons have set up a charity foundation, known as The Community Chest, to meet the needs of the vernacular and mission schools.

The Chest promises to dispense at least RM100mil a year to help Chinese and Tamil-national type schools and mission schools

throughout the country.

Sixty-one schools nationwide received the initial round of funding totaling RM26.1mil at the launch of The Community Chest by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Najib lauded the move, saying it was a creative solution to ensure quality education in the country.

The Community Chest will be

managed by a Board of Trustees and chaired by Genting Malaysia chairman and chief executive Tan Sri Lim Kok Thay. Lim said the Chest would provide a timely boost to the advancement of education in Malaysia, especially for schools that urgently needed a helping hand.

> SEE PAGE 16

RM100m education aid

Vernacular and mission schools to benefit from Community Chest

One for the album: Najib (centre) and Lim (next to Najib, in batik) posing for a group picture with the recipients from the 61 schools at SJK (C) Confucian in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.



By LEE YEN MUN
yenmun@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Vernacular and mission schools in the country can now seek assistance from a new charity foundation - The Community Chest - set up by the country's top business tycoons.

The Community Chest promises to dispense at least RM100mil yearly to Chinese, Tamil and mission schools, and other learning institutions which apply for assistance from it.

It will be managed by a board of trustees and chaired by Genting Malaysia chairman and chief executive Tan Sri Lim Kok Thay.

The foundation started its work by giving out RM26.1mil in assistance to 61 schools during a mock cheque presentation by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at its launch at SJK (C) Confucian here yesterday.

Of the 61 schools, six were SJK (T) schools, six were mission schools and the rest SJK (C) schools. They received between RM25,000 and RM2.5mil each.

SJK (C) Confucian and SJK (T) R.R.I in Selangor received RM2.5mil each.

The funds will be used to repair leaking roofs, windows and ceilings, and build new classrooms, laboratories and multi-purpose halls.

Lim told reporters that The Community Chest would not rely on funding from the Government.

He described the charity's role as complementary to government initiatives in enhancing education in Malaysia.

However, Lim said its funds were "relatively small" and hence would be focused on education-related initiatives.

Lim was among four tycoons who contributed RM500,000 each to kick-start the fund.

The others were Hong Leong Financial Group Bhd chairman Tan Sri Quek Leng Chan, Lion Group Malaysia chairman Tan Sri William

Cheng and CMY Capital Group chairman Tan Sri Chua Ma Yu.

The four are in the eight-man board of trustees together with Genting Malaysia deputy chairman and AMMB Holdings Bhd group director Tun Mohammed Hanif Omar, Westports Malaysia Sdn Bhd executive chairman Tan Sri G. Gnanalingam, SP Setia Foundation chairman and 1Malaysia Foundation trustee Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye, and Amanah Yayasan Budaya Dayak and Tun Jugah Foundation chairman Tan Sri Leonard Linggi Jugah.

The Community Chest came into fruition with the acquisition of Pan Malaysian Pools Sdn Bhd (PMP) by Jana Pendidikan Malaysia Sdn Bhd last month from Tanjong Plic.

Lim said The Community Chest would initially be supported by contributions from the profits of PMP and investment returns from the fund.

All dividends generated by PMP, after the deduction of its expenses and other financial obligations, will be channelled towards the charity.

Lim said The Community Chest hoped to receive strong support of donations from the public.

He said its activities would be fully executed by a subsidiary entity registered as Pusat Pengurusan Pendidikan Malaysia Sdn Bhd (PPP).

The Government has announced that all chargeable income of PMP and donations toward the charity will be tax-exempt.

"This effectively means that PMP has become a non-profit establishment," said Lim.

Projects and plans under the charity will be presented to its board of trustees for approval.

Learning institutions that wish to apply for funding must state a specific need for the benefit of the establishment and/or the students.

Interested applicants must be registered with the Education or Higher Education Ministries and other relevant Malaysian regulatory bodies.

THE COMMUNITY CHEST

What is it?

- > A not-for-profit organisation with funds derived from Pan Malaysian Pools Sdn Bhd (PMP) profits, return investments from the fund and public donations.
- > Previously owned by tycoon T. Ananda Krishnan, PMP was acquired by Jana Pendidikan Malaysia Sdn Bhd (JPM) for RM2.1bil last month by a consortium of Malaysian businessmen.
- > At least RM100mil will be disbursed annually to educational institutions and students in need of financial aid.
- > An eight-man board of trustees will oversee the disbursement of The Community Chest.

Main shareholders of JPM

Genting CSR	RM250mil	Bernard Bong	RM10mil
Hong Leong Bank	RM50mil	Datuk Yap Kim San	RM10mil
Parkson Group	RM30mil	Ngau Boon Keat's family-owned company	RM10mil
Tan Sri Chua Ma Yu	RM30mil	A retired banker living in Singapore (former Malaysian citizen)	RM10mil
Tan Sri Koo Yuen Kim	RM30mil	Tan Sri Ta Kin Yan	RM5mil
Hap Seng Group	RM30mil	Tan Jee Meng	RM5mil
See Hoy Chan Group	RM10mil	Total	RM500mil
Tan Sri G. Gnanalingam	RM10mil		
LGB CSR Sdn Bhd	RM10mil		

Application Guidelines

- > Learning institutions in Malaysia recognised by the Education or Higher Education Ministries that are not-for-profit and have insufficient funding from the state or federal governments or from the community.
- > Initiatives supported by the charity must be designed to improve the quality of education in the learning institutions, including dissemination of materials relating to education.
- > The charity does not fund events, trips, uniforms, books or stationery.
- > Scholarships will be considered for needy and exceptional Malaysian students to study at top tier universities worldwide.

For information, email to enquiries@commchest.org.my



PM: Tycoons have come up with a creative fund

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has lauded the country's top tycoons for setting up a welfare fund to boost the quality of education in the country, calling it a "very creative approach".

"The Community Chest is a creative solution and approach to help the education sector develop even further," said Najib.

"We have always said that access to quality education is something that needs to be strengthened.

"And in principle, this has been seen today," he said at the Chest's launch at SJK (C) Confucian here.

"The future of Malaysia is in its people and the only way to develop our people is to ensure they have the right education," said Najib.

The Prime Minister said the Government needed the private sector's help to raise funds and ensure quality education for all as there were many schools in the country.

Education is so vital to the future of Malaysia. We must continue to invest in education.

- DATUK SERI NAJIB TUN RAZAK

"The population is also increasing," he added.

The Government, said Najib, placed high priority on education, which receives about a third of all allocations.

"But still, educational needs are so vast and there is so much to be done at all levels that it is impossible to define the money spent by the Government as enough.

"Education is so vital to the future of Malaysia. We must continue to invest in education.

"My dream is to see each and every Malaysian realise his or her dream.

"I do not want to see them fall by the wayside," he said.

"It is a colossal dream that can only be realised if all contribute and invest in education," said Najib.

Najib also said that he was impressed by the Chest's board of trustees, all of whom were well-established community leaders.

All-round praise for educational charity initiative

KUALA LUMPUR: The Community Chest will help ease the burden and speed up the development of Chinese and Tamil schools, said MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek.

"This is a very creative and innovative idea. Moreover, these are all partially-aided schools, so they will always need funds.

"It shows that the private sector is working well with the Government to ensure better educational facilities," he said after attending the launch of The Community Chest at SJK (C) Confucian here yesterday.

He said The Community Chest should be viewed positively as it was meant to boost the education sector.

CIMB Group chief executive Datuk Seri Nazir Razak, whose bank is the foundation's financial adviser, applauded the initiative by the corporate leaders, led by Genting Malaysia chairman and chief executive Tan Sri Lim Kok Thay.

"This is a very strong statement by corporate leaders that they want to give back to education. There is never enough funds for education and what they are doing is something

that deserves our respect," he said after the launch.

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong said the project would enable vernacular and mission schools to obtain funding beyond the government funds that they receive.

"It is a good project to give back to society. We always welcome private sector initiative as it is a smart partnership," he said.

Gerakan president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said the concept of a community-supported education prac-

tised by the Chinese community should be implemented for all schools.

"In other countries, most schools are supported by private initiatives and their alumni. The Community Chest is a creative way to raise funds and from what I understand, the fund will increase when the economy continues to grow," he said.

Malayan Christian Schools Council honorary secretary Yin Kam Yoke said the allocation would be helpful to maintain mission schools which serve all communities.

"We are multi-ethnic, multi-racial and are a microcosm of Malaysian society," she said.

Dong Zong (United Chinese School Committees Association) president Dr Yap Sin Tian said the allocation was timely as many vernacular schools were in need of development funds.

"This is a good starting point, and we are very happy with the news. At the same time, we need a proper long-term solution by allocating more funds for vernacular schools under the national budget," he said.