

# THE STRAITS TIMES

## Indonesian tycoon donates \$1 million to needy NTU students on birthday



Dato' Sri Dr Tahir (third from right) presenting NTU deputy president and provost professor Ling San a \$1 million cheque, on March 24, 2021. PHOTO: NTU

SINGAPORE - As a commerce undergraduate in 1973 at Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) predecessor Nanyang University, a 21-year-old Indonesian received a scholarship from the school.

Fast forward 48 years and the businessman and philanthropist Dato' Sri Dr Tahir, who goes by one name, has decided to pay it back by donating \$1 million to support needy NTU students ahead of his 69th birthday on Friday (March 26).

The 68-year-old, who is a permanent resident here, said: "My parents made a living by constructing pedicabs (a three-wheeled rickshaw). I was studying to be a medical doctor, but I had to drop out to focus on helping with my father's business when he fell sick.

"I hope this gift will help NTU students in need, and give them the support they need, just like NTU had helped me before."

Dr Tahir is the founder of the Mayapada Group, one of Indonesia's largest conglomerates with businesses in financial services, healthcare and real estate.

On Wednesday, the billionaire presented NTU deputy president and provost professor Ling San with the \$1 million cheque.

With a matching grant by the Government, his donation of \$1 million will become a \$2.5 million endowment fund that will go towards bursaries helping financially disadvantaged undergraduates at NTU.

Since 2010, the National University of Singapore, Singapore Management University and NTU have received a government grant of 1.5 times the amount they raise.

Said NTU vice-president for advancement Lien Siaou-Sze: "As one of NTU's most distinguished alumni, Dr Tahir has made a profound impact towards education, research, healthcare and society.

"His generous gift towards student bursaries in NTU reflects his deep commitment and dedication towards higher education and the less privileged."

In 2018, he donated \$500,000 to set up the Tahir NTU-Universitas Airlangga students exchange programme.

3/24/2021

Indonesian tycoon donates \$1 million to needy NTU students on birthday, Parenting & Education News & Top Stories - The Straits Times

It provides students from universities in Surabaya an immersive learning experience in NTU to improve their English language skills and forge friendships.

Last year, he donated \$10,000 to the NTU Priorities Fund, which is part of the NTU Covid-19 relief package to assist students facing financial hardship due to the pandemic.