

# Indonesian tycoon gives \$1 million to help needy...

By Sherlyn Sim ssherlyn@sph.com.sg

The Straits Times

Thursday 25th March 2021

425 words

Page 6 | Section: SINGAPORE

330cm on the page



## Indonesian tycoon gives \$1 million to help needy NTU students

Sherlyn Sim

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 that student - Dato' Sri Dr Tahir - is now a well-established businessman and philanthropist.

To give back, Dr Tahir, who goes by one name, is donating \$1 million to support needy NTU students ahead of his 69th birthday tomorrow.

Dr Tahir, who is a permanent resi-

dent here, said: "My parents made a living by constructing pedicabs (three-wheeled rickshaws). 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 Mayapada Group, one of Indonesia's largest conglomerates with businesses in financial services, healthcare and real estate.

The billionaire yesterday presented NTU deputy president and provost professor Ling San with the \$1 million cheque.



Dato' Sri Dr Tahir (in pink) presenting the cheque for \$1 million to NTU's deputy president and provost professor Ling San yesterday. With them are (from left) NTU's senior vice-president of research Lam Khin Yong and deputy director of development office Tee Ah Heng, as well as former MP and NTU alumna Lee Bee Wah and NTU vice-president for advancement Lien Siaou-Sze. PHOTO: NTU

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 student exchange programme. It provides students from universities in Surabaya, Indonesia, with an immersive learning experience in NTU to improve their English language skills and forge friendships.

Last year, Dr Tahir 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.

ssherlyn@sph.com.sg