



Kurup with students of UMS and SK Pohon Batu.

Kurup praises UMS effort to reach out to rural folk

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KOTA KINABALU: Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Joseph Kurup commended Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) effort to reach out to rural folk.

Kurup, who is also Pensiangan MP, said UMS through its Cross-Borneo Expedition 2016 (RB2016) has given exposure to the hardly-known Kampung Puun Batu, Nabawan.

The third edition of the annual expedition was organised by the Psychology and Education Faculty (FPP), Medicine and Health Science Faculty (FPSK) and UMS Four Wheel Drive Volunteers Club (UMS4WDVC). It involved 29 vehicles.

It aimed to introduce UMS to the rural communities by going through obstacles and tough terrain as experienced by villagers, apart from expanding UMS' research scope.

Kg Puun Batu, situated 60km from Sook township, has about 100 residents.

According to Kurup, even though the access road to the village is not in good condition, the Government has approved an allocation to repair and build a road and a bridge to aid the villagers.

"RM10 million has been approved and the road is actively built and repaired in phases until it reaches Kampung Puun Batu.

"Aside from that, the application by the villagers to obtain zinc roof has also been approved," he said during the launching ceremony of RB16 at SK Pohon Batu.

He said some 30 families had submitted applications to repair damaged roofs and the material will be handed over to the villagers.

Meanwhile, SK Pohon Batu Headmaster Dennis Gapilit said he was touched as Kurup's visit has brought good news for the villagers.

"It is not easy to reach the village and the visit by Tan Sri Joseph and his group is commended by the villagers," he said.

Dennis, who was only posted in SK Pohon Batu five months ago, promised to help the pupils and villagers to develop their village, especially in terms of education, and urged the relevant authorities to channel aid to them.

Among the activities conducted during RB16 were health checks, dental checks, health education, clothes donation presentation, friendly football match, karaoke and Unduk Ngadau competition.

The expedition participants were also brought to visit a limestone cave next to the village and also a waterfall nearby.